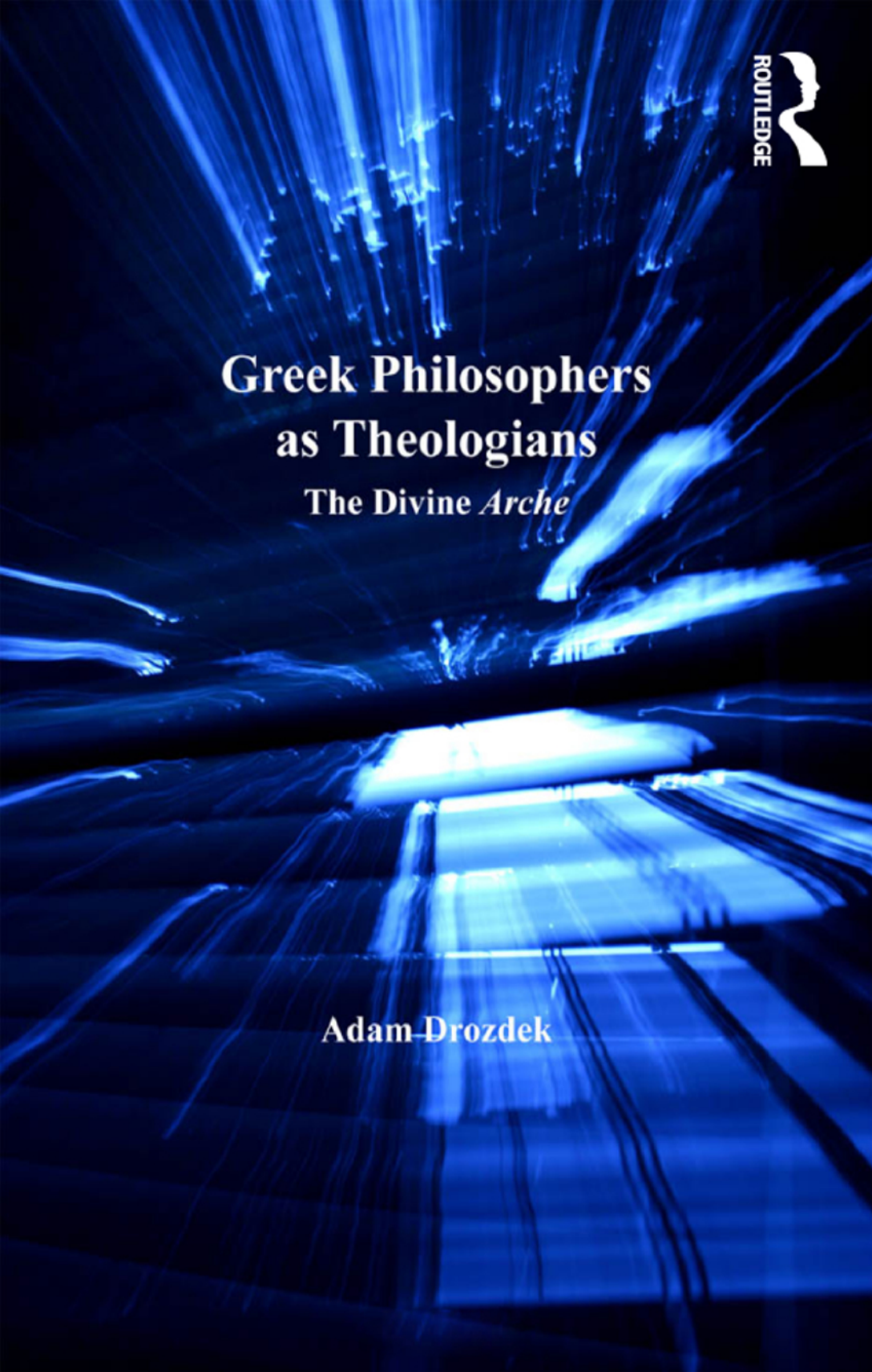
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Greek Philosophers as Theologians
The Divine *Arche*
Adam Drozdek

GREEK PHILOSOPHERS AS THEOLOGIANS

Concepts of God presented by Greek philosophers were significantly different from the image of the divine of popular religion and indicate a fairly sophisticated theological reflection from the very inception of Greek philosophy. This book presents a comprehensive history of theological thought of Greek philosophers from the Presocratics to the early Hellenistic period. Concentrating on views concerning the attributes of God and their impact on eschatological and ethical thought, Drozdek explains that theology was of paramount importance for all Greek philosophers even in the absence of purely theological or religious language.

To my wife, Bogna

Greek Philosophers as Theologians

The Divine *Arche*

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Preface

The subject of this book is a history of theological thought of Greek philosophers from the Presocratics to the early Hellenistic period. Concepts of God presented by Greek philosophers were significantly different from the image of the divine of popular religion and indicate a fairly sophisticated theological reflection from the very inception of Greek philosophy. The book concentrates on views of the philosophers concerning the attributes of God and the impact of their theological position on views concerning eschatology, ethics, and social thinking (if views concerning these areas can be recovered from the extant sources).

The view espoused here is that theology was of paramount importance for all Greek philosophers even if theological or religious language is not used (for example, Anaxagoras), or if theological reasoning is of apparently secondary importance (for example, Democritus), or if religious concepts are rationalized (for example, the Sophists). More specifically, the emergence of Greek philosophy coincides with theological elaboration of the concept of the divine. The philosophical interest in establishing the cosmic *arche* – that is, both the principle and the beginning of the world – is rooted in the interest of what constitutes divinity of the gods, which together give rise to a very strong monotheistic bias of theological views of the most of the Greek philosophers. This is clear from the very beginning of Greek philosophical reflection, when the Milesians' ontology is based on monotheistic coloring of their views which consider one cosmic principle, and when the Pythagoreans focus on the principle of the harmonious makeup of the world. This monotheistic tendency is continued by Xenophanes' strong profession of the existence of one God; with Parmenides, whose Being clearly possesses divine attributes. It can also be seen later in Anaxagoras, whose *Nous* was a divine being, all alone, holy and ineffable; in Empedocles, Diogenes of Apollonia, Socrates, Antisthenes, and in Plato, whose Demiurge was a creator of the world; and in the divine Unmoved Mover of Aristotle. The tendency is also very strong in successors of Plato and Aristotle, and it is pronounced in the Stoics as sublimely expressed in Cleanthes' hymn.

Theological views of Greek philosophers usually differed from views commonly accepted to the extent that some of them were convicted of impiety, and as the fate of Socrates indicates, such a conviction could not be treated lightly. However, in many respects, theological views of philosophers offer the view of the divine which is grander than the popular views.

This book attempts to present the process of development of the concept of God. Although, as stated, the beginning of Greek philosophy is marked by the emergence of monotheism, the problem of how this monotheistic vision applies in life was probably of lesser concern to the Milesians than the theological purification of the concept of the divine. Also, physics reflects a particular version of monotheism espoused by the Milesians and becomes a supporting argument of the validity of this monotheism.

But monotheism will stay in Greek philosophy, and with it, a more personal side will be developed: the problem of immortality, the problem of theodicy, the problem of providence, the problem of the structure of society. These problems will be presented in the course of the discussion of the views of particular philosophers.

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Chapter 1

The Milesians

It is not very often that the Ionian thinkers are considered to be theologians. An exception might be made for Xenophanes and Heraclitus, but the first three Ionians, the Milesians, are perceived as philosophers who were primarily interested in cosmogony, cosmology, physics, and biology rather than in theology. Nevertheless, the meaning of the ideas put forth by the Milesians is drastically impoverished if the religious aspect is not taken into account or is treated as a negligible element. Their theology should, however, be set against the background of religious views of the epic poets.

Epic gods

Homer and Hesiod "provided the Greeks with the account of the origins of the gods and gave the gods their names and defined their honors and skills and indicated their shapes" (Herodotus 2.53), but Homer transmitted religious tradition as much as he created it. Not always is it possible to separate the old from the new. It is assumed here that the tremendous importance of Homer for the Greeks is due in no small measure to his theology.[1]

The most pronounced attribute of Greek gods is their immortality. The gods are immortal (ἀθάνατοι, *Il*. 19.2, *Th*. 21, 105), they live forever (αἰὲν ἐόντες, *Il.* 1.290, *Th.* 33, ἀειγενέται, *Il.* 6.527). There were times when gods did not exist. There were times when inanimate matter had the potential to generate them through an inscrutable mechanism of theogony. Other attributes included in divinity of immortal gods is their intelligence and, consequently, being alive; next, their superhuman knowledge, superhuman powers, and an ability to appear in any form.

There is also unrelenting fate, *moira*. To see the meaning of *moira*, it is helpful to consider the phrase κατὰ μοῖραν. Someone can speak *kata moiran*, according to right or order, as is suitable (*Il.* 1.286, 8.146); an action can be undertaken *kata moiran*, in good order, for example, a trench is crossed by Trojans in disorderly fashion (*Il.* 16.367), the Greeks sit in an assembly in order (*Il.* 19.256), or a heifer is cut up for a feast in due order (*Od.* 3.457). It seems that "the underlying idea of the phrase is that of order, which may find expression in different ramifications of life."[2] In at least one case, there is a strong ethical coloring of the phrase as when Odysseus rebukes Polyphemus that

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[1] And thus "we would be quite wrong to set aside the model of divinity that we find in the Homeric poems and imagine it as purely literary fiction and no part of the 'sense' of Greek religion," John Gould, 'On making sense of Greek religion', in P.E. Easterling and J.V. Muir (eds), *Greek Religion and Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), p. 25.

[2] B.C. Dietrich, *Death, Fate and the Gods* (London: The Athlone Press, 1967), pp. 209, 227, 275.

what he did was not right, *ou kata moiran* (*Od.* 9.352). The phrase refers to social order which may have moral overtones, but the important thing is that orderliness is meant by fate.[3] Something is fateful not because it is unexpected, irregular, random, but, on the contrary, because it is expected, normally done, regular.

Ontologically, this idea of social order as expressed in the phrase *kata moiran* can be extended to the cosmic dimension. There is an orderliness of nature that can be seen by everyone: change of season, regular change of the duration of night and day, regular motions of celestial bodies, expected and thus regular tendency of bodies to fall or to rise, depending on their weight.[4] So it may be said that a stone released from the hand was fated to fall to the ground since this is what stones normally do.

By positing fate as reality higher than the reality of the gods, the reality preceding the existence of the gods, fate, that is, orderliness of cosmos, is made in one respect more divine than the gods. The gods are created beings, fate is not. Fate always existed and always will exist. It is thus characterized by full, unlimited eternity as opposed to the semi-eternity of the gods.[5] If eternity is considered a primary attribute of divinity, then fate certainly is a divine entity.

Fate is an embodiment of the orderliness of the universe, an expression of natural and social order. As such, fate has an ethical component. Both immortals and mortals should act morally and justly, and rules of morality and justice are known, or felt, by all. The role of the gods is to be guardians of justice and morality (*Od.* 14.83–84).[6] However, the gods very often, all too often, not only disappoint but also display "a comprehensive activity for the ruin of the mankind."[7] They are deceitful, touchy, unreliable, meddlesome, jealous, vengeful, and so on. Hence, there are infrequent expressions of pessimism of Homeric heroes and this pessimism deepens in later centuries in the lyric age.[8] This pessimistic sentiment is strongly expressed by Mimnermus of Colophon, Semonides of Amorgos, Theognis of Megara. The traditional religion was thus profoundly unfulfilling, disappointing, almost irrelevant. One way of dealing with the disenchantment caused by popular religion is

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[3] "*Moira* is not a force that is active but an order of events which is acknowledged," Pierre Chantraine, 'Le divin et les dieux chez Homère', in *La Notion du divin depuis Homère jusqu'à Platon* (Geneva: Vandoeuvres, 1954), p. 70; fate "stands behind the gods as a shadowy reality, a fixed order rather than a power, a divine conscience, at times gathering moral grandeur, at times dreadful and oppressive to men," William C. Greene, *Moira* (New York: Harper Torchbook, 1963 [1948]), pp. 13–14.

[4] Cf. P. Engelbert Eberhard, *Das Schicksal als poetische Idee bei Homer* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 1923), pp. 73–75.

[5] Cf. the statement made by H.D.F. Kitto in a discussion, *La notion*, 40: "if the gods are not eternal, what is? The idea of Order…: *kosmos*, *ananke*, *moira.*"

[6] Although this is much more pronounced in the *Odyssey* than in the *Iliad*, Erland Ehnmark, *Theldea of God in Homer* (Uppsala: Almquist & Wiksell, 1935), p. 99; Carl F. von Nägelsbach, *Homerische Theologie* (Nürnberg, 1861), p. 227; Dietrich, *Death, Fate and the Gods*, p. 324.

[7] Svend Ranulf, *The Jealousy of the Gods and Criminal Law at Athens* London: William & Norgate, 1933–34; reprint, New York: Arno Press, 1974), p. 87.

[8] Cf. E.R. Dodds, *The Greeks and the Irrational* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971 [1951]), p. 29; Hugh Lloyd-Jones, *The Justice of Zeus* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971), p. 36.

to perform an intellectual work on the concept of divinity. All in traditional religion is not to be discarded. What was positive in it and what caused disappointment? What is unacceptable, what is just imperfect in the traditional image of the gods? What are the gods, what is the divine and what should it be? With such questions a way to theology and philosophy is opened, and philosophical thought in Greece makes its arrival.

Thales

Very little is known about Thales. He was considered to be one of the Seven Sages, which by itself is a testimony of his acumen. On the one hand, although many scientific achievements are attributed to him, such as discovering the cause of a solar eclipse, or proving some geometrical theorems, these achievements were reported 700 to 1000 years after his death. Early sources, on the other hand, supposedly indicate that he was primarily a practical man "with a bent towards natural science."[9] Although the doubts about Thales' contribution to geometry and astronomy are justified, his theoretical bent is nevertheless very strong, which is manifested in his philosophy. Aristotle says that Thales is among "the wise (σοφοί) but not practically wise (φρόνιμοι)" (*EN* 1141b4–5 = 59A30), but, when pressed, Thales can show practical applications of his theoretical pursuits as exemplified in the story of the olive-press scheme (*Pol.* 1259a6–23 = 11A10).

Aristotle is the authority on Thales' most famous statement that water is the *arche* of the universe where *arche* is "that of which all existing things are and from which they first come to be and into which they are finally destroyed, its substance remaining, but changing in its properties" (*Met.* 983b6–11,17–27 = A12).[10] Whether Thales himself would agree with such an absolutist understanding of the *arche* remains uncertain, but because Anaximander is credited with the first use of *arche* and because such an absolutist understanding of the *arche* fits in with what we know about Anaximander and Anaximenes, it seems reasonable that Thales understood it similarly. That is, everything that exists, according to this understanding of the *arche*, is but a manifestation of the eternal watery substrate and if everything perishes, one thing remains, namely water.[11]

Why did Thales choose water as the *arche*? Many answers have been conjectured. The reasons were already obscure for Aristotle, who says that Thales got the notion "*perhaps* from seeing that the nourishment of everything is moist" (A12). That is, one ingredient is present in all foods, namely water, and thus water must be a factor

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[9] D.R. Dicks, 'Thales', *Classical Quarterly* 53 (1959), p. 297.

[10] It is clear that Aristotle did not have access to original writings of Thales (if there were such writings), but quotes from Hippias, as argued by Bruno Snell, 'Die Nachrichten über die Lehren des Thales und die Anfänge der griechischen Philosophie- und Literaturgeschichte', *Philologus* 96 (1944), pp. 170–182, and so Hippias is "at the beginning of writing on history of philosophy," p. 181. Cf. Jaap Mansfeld, 'Aristotle and others on Thales, or the beginning of natural philosophy', *Mnemosyne* 38 (1985), p. 115.

[11] It is "more than improbable" that Thales used the concept of *arche*, as stated by Wolfgang H. Pleger, *Die Vorsokratiker* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1991), p. 58. But Thales could express the *arche* idea without mentioning the concept.

that makes nourishment nourishing. The argument is rather weak. Even if we agree that water is always present in nourishment and there are no completely dry foods (a cracker may have some particles of water from the air or from the mouth), this may only mean that water is needed as a lubricant to the intake of food. In the context of discussing "cruder thinkers," like Hippon, who thought that the soul is water, Aristotle modifies the argument by saying that the choice of water "seems" to have been determined by the idea that "the seed of everything is moist" (*De anima* 405b2–3 = 31A4), which does not considerably strengthen the argument. A stronger argument is given by Theophrastus who says that the choice of water was caused by the observation that corpses dry up (*ap.* Simplicius, *In Phys.* 23.21–29 = A13). In these arguments, water is considered a source of life: indispensable to maintain life through nourishment, to begin life through the seed, so that life ends when water vanishes. In this way, water is not made a principle or a substrate of everything, but only a seat of life. If there were no water, a lifeless universe could still exist.

One possible reason for the choice of water is Thales' strong interest in nautical matters (building canals, explaining the periodical floods of the Nile, diverting the river Halys),[12] but this would explain at best his interest in mathematics, astronomy, and the like, but not in cosmology and philosophy.[13] Another reason is simply the fact that Thales lived close to the sea.[14] But so did Anaxagoras and Anaximenes.

A more comprehensive reason is given by Heraclitus Homericus when he says that water is "easily formed into each different thing": into slime and earth when compacted, into air when exhaled, and "the finest part is kindled from air into aether" (*Quest. Hom.* 22).[15] However, the same case can be made about any other substance using the same reasoning; for example, aether is a substrate because when compacted, it becomes air, and the crudest part is compacted from air into water, and so on.

It seems that the primary reason for the choice of water as a substrate should not be sought in physiology or geography, but in religion. In that direction points an explanation that Thales was inspired by the cult of Poseidon who keeps earth in its place in the sea.[16] But it seems that a less parochial view of religion is required to lead to the view of water being a cosmic principle.

Already some ancient authors stated that Thales took his ideas on water from Egypt.[17] There are claims that Thales "practiced philosophy in Egypt" (Aetius 1.3.1; Proclus, *In Eucl.* 65 = A11), where he traveled and even was taught by priests (DL (Diogenes Laertius, Vitae philosophorum) 1.27 = A1). The claim of his

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[12] Benjamin Farrington, *The Faith of Epicurus* (New York: Basic Books, 1967), p. 39.

[13] Josef Dörfler, 'Die kosmogonischen Elemente in der Naturphilosophie des Thales', *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie* 25 (1912), p. 313.

[14] Michel Costantini, *La Génération Thalès* (Paris: Criterion, 1992), p. 92. Therefore, "rise and ebb, water that spreads softly on the beach, distant scintillations of the many sails, this is what nourished his meditation," p. 85.

[15] The same argument is used by J.C. Davies, 'Mythological influences on the first emergence of Greek scientific and philosophical thought', *Folklore* 81 (1970), p. 28.

[16] August B. Krische, *Die theologischen Lehren der griechischen Denker* (Göttingen: Dieterichsche Buchhandlung, 1840), pp. 35–36.

[17] Plutarch, *De Is. et Os.* 34 = A11; Simplicius, *In De caelo* 522.14–18 = A14.

visit to Egypt may be a late invention,[18] but this does not mean that he may not have been influenced by Egyptian cosmogonic views. Miletus was the largest city of Ionian Greece, and, being a port city near the mouth of Meander, it conducted an extensive trade with Egypt where the Greeks founded Naukratis. Surely, not only goods were transported but information about Egyptian religion as well.

For the Egyptians, the earth is a flat platter with a corrugated rim, and so Thales considers the earth to be flat and floating upon water, which is, according to Aristotle, the oldest theory (*De caelo* 294a28–30 = A14). This is not a Greek view. The Greeks thought that the earth was surrounded by water, not floating on it. This fact was strongly stressed later by Xenophanes who considered the earth to extend downward infinitely (21B28). Waters on which the earth floated the Egyptians called Nun. Most importantly, Nun was the *primordial* waters from which life first came and from which everything else was generated, beginning with the sun-god Ra.

Also Mesopotamian mythology gives waters a pre-eminent role in cosmogony. Sumerian Enki (lord of the soul) or Akkadian Ea (god of the deep) are gods of the waters that nourish the earth. Moreover, *Enuma elish* in its description of the beginnings of the world, presents three primordial deities: Tiamat, a watery chaos and the sea; Apsu, the sweet waters underground; and Mummu, probably representing clouds and mist. The three deities mingled their waters together, from which everything else gradually originated, beginning with gods Lahmu and Lahamu.

The Greeks also acknowledged the importance of water in their mythology in the view that Okeanos "flows round the whole earth" (Herodotus 4.8) and "all rivers and all seas and all springs and deep wells" flow from it (*Il.* 21.196–197). However, Homer also states that Okeanos is the "origin of gods" (14.201, 302) and even "the origin of all" (246). This is an isolated ascription of such a prominent role to Okeanos. Nevertheless, it is there, and both Plato (*Theaet.* 152e, *Crat.* 402b) and Aristotle (*Met.* 983b30–31) quote Homer on this.

Finally, we should also mention the Orphics. One of the Orphic theogonies preserved by Hellanicus and Hieronymus posits water and matter, from which the earth solidifies, at the beginning of the world from which emerges a dragon (δράκων) called unaging Chronos and Heracles.[19] "What else does this dragon mean as a comparison of the world with a living being, with an animal, whose body has life, soul, and motion?" asks Dörfler rhetorically.[20]

The mythologies just briefly presented have at least one factor in common, namely the importance ascribed to water as the starting point of the universe in general and life in particular. A mind was needed that treated such religious explanations seriously to abstract in the ecumenical spirit what is common in these mythological cosmogonies. And this is a step made by Thales. As phrased by Kirk, in stimulating the Milesian philosophy, "the crucial factor was the comparison of Mesopotamian, Egyptian and Greek versions [of myths], which

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[18] Dicks, 'Thales', p. 306, but cf. Theodor Hopfner, *Orient und griechische Philosophie* (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1925), p. 17.

[19] Damascius, *De principiis* 123 bis; Athenagoras, *Pro Christianis* 18.20 = 1B13.

[20] Dörfler, 'Die kosmogonischen Elemente in der Naturphilosophie des Thales', p. 310.

first became possible … in the late seventh and early sixth centuries in Ionia, especially Miletus. Mesopotamian Enki or Ea, Egyptian Nun and Greek Okeanos are all primordial gods, and each of them, even in mythical guise, plainly represents water." What Thales did was to concentrate on "the rational common essence of Enki, Nun and Okeanos as an actual world constituent."[21] Or, more guardedly: "It is possible" that Thales "endorsed the oriental conception of a primeval ocean from which all life came from."[22]

The primary reason why water was chosen is theological. Physiological and astronomic reasons could have been contributing factors. The reason for a choice of any *arche* is a dissatisfaction with traditional Greek religion with its plethora of quarreling gods capable of most unseemly deeds, gods that frequently elicited anything but an attitude of awe and worship. It was common to assume that what made the gods gods was primarily their deathlessness. They were generated but eternal. By extending this eternity to the past, a concept of true divinity is created. Only as truly eternal can such divinity be the source of everything else. These two attributes – eternity and being an ultimate source – become, for Thales, the characteristics of the ultimate principle of the universe. By choosing eternity, Thales uses the traditional attribute of the divine. Being the ultimate source, on the other hand, is an attribute significantly extending the traditional view of the divine. In traditional mythology, gods were created. For Thales, the divine is what creates. And by looking at different religions, he chose water for this divine principle.

Notwithstanding his interest in practical matters, Thales was primarily of a theoretical mind, a philosopher who extracts from religion a unifying factor. The primacy of theological interests can also be seen in other views attributed to him.

Thales supposed, says Aristotle, "that the soul was something kinetic since he said that the [lode]stone has soul because it moves iron" (*De anima* 405a19–21 = A22). This statement is an expression of an animistic view of the universe. There is hardly anything more inanimate than a stone, be it a lodestone, and yet, for Thales, even a stone is an animate object.[23] Motion observed in everyday life is not a manifestation of mechanistic laws of nature, but an expression of life hidden even in the most lifeless guise. This belief is carried to the extreme in Thales' statement that "all things are full

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[21] G.S. Kirk, *The Nature of Greek Myths* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1974), p. 295; similarly, Charles H. Kahn, *Anaximander and the Origin of Greek Cosmology* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1960), p. 200. Cf. a more general statement that "the Greek thinkers … created a method to which they were led by comparison of conclusions reached by ancient civilizations," Jacques Pirenne, 'L'Influence égyptienne sur la philosophie ionienne', *Annuaire de l'Institut de Philologie et d'Histoire Orientales et Slaves* 15 (1958–60), p. 81, see also p. 76.

[22] H. and H.A. Frankfort, 'The emancipation of thought from myth', in H. Frankfort et al., *Before Philosophy* (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1972 [1946]), p. 253.

[23] Slightly more cautiously: the soul is "an analogon of the supposed principle of motion in living [beings]," W.M. Frankl, 'Thales und der Magnetstein', *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie* 35 (1923), p. 155; which may suggest that for Thales, the principle of life and the principle of motion are not necessarily the same.

of gods".[24] In this way, the whole of nature and everything in it is not only alive, but also divinized. And all this began with water.

What was the nature of this primordial water such that creating a living and divinized universe was possible? If everything is full of gods, then apparently water, including primordial water, is full of them as well. It is extremely likely that Thales' primeval water was teeming with gods. However, it may well be that at the beginning was pure water in which the gods were created, very much in the spirit of the *Theogony*. Whether this water itself was considered to be a god by Thales, we do not know, but if the apophthegm, "What is the divine? That which has no beginning nor end" (DL 1.36), is anything close to what Thales might have said, then, yes, water is a divine entity. Such an ascription is not impossible in a thinker who makes mythological reports the point of departure and whose two younger fellow townsmen, Anaximander and Anaximenes, considered their own *archai* to be divine.

Because water is an ontological principle, the gods that are in it are its manifestations and should not be considered as entities independent of the water-*arche*. From considering the gods independent, there is but one step to considering the divine independent and stating that God used water to mold the cosmos (Cicero, *ND* 1.25 = A23). Just as in Greek and Middle East mythologies, Thales' gods are created and as such are also material entities. Water is divine because it is the source of all things and is uncreated and eternal. It is possible, considering the theological roots of his philosophy, that Thales' water was not only endowed with some divine attributes, but it was God. It is only a likely guess that this God-*hydor* was for him an intelligible being: even the least significant of the gods of mythology was a rational being. Furthermore, that much was apparently obvious for Aetius when he explicitly stated that for Thales "God was the mind of the cosmos" (1.7.11 = A23). This must be understood in the materialistic and also pantheistic framework: God is water and water, because of its supreme divinity, is the *arche*. But this water should not be spiritualized. It is empirical water, not something being water only by name. It is, thus, anachronistic to state that "the water of Thales is not a material principle but rather a symbol for the primeval matter from which emanates all becoming."[25] Thales was hardly a peripatetic. What would the primeval matter be if it were not water? Only a material cause? What would be formal, efficient, and final causes? If Aristotle's terminology is used, then we can at best state that Thales' water is all the four causes combined in one substrate.[26]

Also, it is far too spiritualized a statement that Thales' "water is, not matter in the ordinary physical sense, but the content of intelligible form, the principle of the differentiability of intelligibility,"[27] or that

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[24] Aristotle, *De anima* 411a8 = A22; Aetius 1.7.11 = A2. But cf. Patricia F. O'Grady, *Thales of Miletus: the beginnings of Western science and philosophy* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002), pp. 122, 244.

[25] John Miller, 'Thales on water: the Egyptian connection', *Southwest Philosophical Studies* 1989, 46.

[26] Or, as cautiously stated, "Thales seems to have made no distinction between primary all-pervasive matter and the all-pervading spirit, or gods," Susan W. Kline, 'The first philosopher of the Western world', *Classical Journal* 35 (1939), p. 85.

[27] Stanley H. Rosen, 'Thales: the beginning of philosophy', in *Essays in Philosophy* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1962), p. 36.

> Thales' "Water" can be the "essence" of earth and fire because it is something completely different from water that one drinks or in which one takes a bath. The essence of water is embodied only in water. But the Principle called "Water" is something different from that essence and it is because of that it can be taken and comprehended not only as the essence of water embodied in water, but also as the [essence] of earth embodied in earth, etc.[28]

These statements appear to be indebted more to Hegel than to Thales. Water is matter in ordinary physical sense. It is not known how Thales envisioned the process of generating the cosmos. However, by the fact that water is the *arche*, earth and fire stem from it: physical earth from physical water. And physicality of water does not contradict its divinity. Spiritual gods and spiritual God come later in Greek philosophy: probably with Anaxagoras if the *Nous* that is separate from matter is considered to be God, but certainly with Plato and Aristotle. In traditional mythology, the gods were as material as everything else, and not infrequently just as carnal, so the physical nature of Thales' water is in agreement with traditional treatment of the gods.

Anaximander

A philosophical interest in the concept of the divine is continued by Thales' pupil, Anaximander. On philosophical level, a question is asked not only about the nature of the gods, but also about the nature of the attributes that make them divine in order to make these attributes the philosophical principles of the universe. In other words, whereas the theological step consisted of extracting the essence of divinity, which was immortality, the philosophical step consisted of extracting the essence of immortality, which is infinity – unlimitedness as such, not infinity of time or of existence, but infinity *per se*. In this way, the process of abstraction leads to the concept of infinity.[29] This is a philosophical step made by Anaximander in which lies his greatest achievement and originality.

According to Anaximander, the world arose from the *Apeiron*, the limitless, the infinity. The *Apeiron* is the beginning and origin (ἀρχή) of what exists, of heavens, and of the worlds. In the first stage, a generating power (τὸ γόνιμον) is separated from the *Apeiron*, which produces two opposites: the hot and the cold. The cold is water enveloped in the air or mist (ἀήρ), and the hot becomes a fiery sphere that surrounds the atmosphere (the cold) that envelops the earth like the bark around a tree (A10). The fiery sphere separates from the cold and turns into rotating wheels filled with fire enveloped in mist. The openings in the wheels are seen as heavenly bodies. The cylindrical earth is

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[28] Alexandre Kojève, *Essai d'une histoire raisonnée de la philosophie païenne* (Paris: Gallimard, 1968), vol. 1, p. 203.

[29] Cornford states that "simply an effort of abstraction" led to the *Apeiron*; but according to him, it was abstracting the *Apeiron* from Thales' water rather than from the essence of divinity, F.M. Cornford, *From Religion to Philosophy* (New York: Harper & Row, 1957 [1912]), p. 145; Uvo Hölscher dismisses a possibility that "the concept [of infinity] could develop from [the concept] of divinity" because seemingly "'unlimitedness' appeared to be incompatible with the Greek concept of divinity," 'Anaximander und die Anfänge der Philosophie', *Hermes* 81 (1953), p. 277; but how can unlimitedness be incompatible with the unlimited existence of the gods?

suspended in the center of the universe (Hippolytus, *Ref.* 1.6.3–5 = A11, Aetius 2.20.1 = A21, Aristotle, *De caelo* 295b10–16 = A26).

The *Apeiron* is the *arche*, the origin of the universe, its ground and a substratum from which everything originates and into which everything returns. Everything in the universe is generated and everything reaches its end, but the *Apeiron* always was and always will be. It is the ultimate origin of everything because it is unoriginated because it cannot be reduced to anything more basic, more fundamental, and more lasting than itself. There are causal chains in the universe, but the links in these chains have only intermediate importance; although one element of the chain has – causally – another element of the chain as its origin, the latter element is not an ultimate origin of the former because it has a temporary existence and its origin can eventually by traced to the *Apeiron*. In this, the term *arche*, which meant *der zeitliche Ursprung* in traditional mythology, enriches its meaning by becoming *der zeitlose Grund*.[30]

The *Apeiron* is everlasting (ἀίδιον) and ageless (ἀγήρων), and it encompasses all the worlds (Hippolytus, *Ref.* 1.6.1 = A11). It governs (κυβερᾶν) all things, and, in Aristotle's words, "it is divine (τὸ θεῖον) because it is immortal (ἀθάνατον) and indestructible (ἀνώλεθρον)" (*Physics* 203b11–14 = A15). The *Apeiron* is divine because it has attributes of divinity. Someone, or something, which is immortal and has a control over all things, must be the supreme divinity, not just a mythical god that is constantly in danger of clashing with other gods, must be the god on whom everything depends, even the very existence of the universe and the existence of other gods if they are allowed to exist. Divinity of the *Apeiron* is not an additional attribute, but the *Apeiron*'s essence, its nature. The *Apeiron* is the god; the *Apeiron* is another denomination of the divinity of this god used to convey its essence, which is its infinity – infinity of its existence and its power.[31]

That the *Apeiron* encompasses everything means that it is outside the fiery wheels of the heavens and extends infinitely in space. The universe created from the stuffs separated from the *Apeiron* are limited in time and space, but the matrix of the universe, the *Apeiron* itself, is unlimited both spatially and temporally. The *Apeiron* always existed and always will exist; it is everywhere outside the heavens. The *Apeiron* is thus very firmly seated in the spatio-temporal framework.[32]

Deriving the universe from the divine *Apeiron* would be far from satisfactory if the *Apeiron* were defined only statically as the unlimitedness from which the universe

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[30] Alexander von Varga, *Geschichtliche Einführung in die Grundbegriffe der Philosophie* (Munich: UNI-Druck, 1977), p. 2; see also Heinz Ambronn, *Apeiron-eon-kenon: Zum Arché-Begriff bei den Vorsokratikern* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1996), p. 49.

[31] When Anaximander says "that the Boundless 'encompasses all things and governs all things', he is satisfying the loftiest demands which religious thought has required of divinity from time immemorial;" the *Apeiron* "is the sole complete realization of the Divine as such, without beginning and without end," Werner Jaeger, *The theology of the early Greek philosophers* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1947), pp. 31, 33. The use of the term τὸ θεῖον is considered to indicate that Anaximander was the first to abstract the general concept of divinity from ὁ θεος, pp. 31, 203–206; cf. Gerald F. Else, 'God and gods in early Greek thought', *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association* 90 (1949), p. 35.

[32] This framework was not abandoned to move "into a new dimension," as conjectured by Paul Seligman, *The Apeiron of Anaximander* (London: The Athlone Press, 1962), p. 145.

emerges and no attempt were made to explain the mechanisms of the universe. The many different natural processes can be explained separately; for example, the earth is suspended in midair because it is equidistant from each point of the heavens (A11); the sea is a remnant of the first moisture (A27); winds are the result of setting the finest vapors of the air by the sun (Aetius 3.7.1 = A24). Such explanations, however, although they may be satisfactory from scientific and practical points of view, are not satisfactory for a philosopher or a theologian. Does the *Apeiron* have anything to do with these particular natural processes, and if it does, as it should, what is the connection? The answer hinges not that much on the nature of natural processes but on the nature of activity of the divine *Apeiron*. What is a suitable activity for the cosmic divinity? This activity is not a collection of mechanical processes of the type found in nature. If this were the case, then it would not be, in fact, possible to distinguish the *Apeiron* from nature. Nature would be the *Apeiron*, the *Apeiron* would simply be a fanciful synonym of nature pointing to the fact that it is infinite (and such a route was later chosen by the atomists).

The answer lies in the only extant fragment from Anaximander's book. In the process of creating the universe, the hot and the cold are separated from the *Apeiron*, that is, the *Apeiron* is not in the world. Existing things come into existence from the *Apeiron* and pass away into it. The processes in the world take place because things come into being and are destroyed, which happens because they "pay penalty and retribution to each other for their injustice according to the order of time" (Simplicius, *In Phys.* 24.18–20 = B1). Although Theophrastus who in Simplicius' excerpt quotes these words, qualifies them as "rather poetic" (24.20–21 = A9), they very likely were not treated merely as a metaphor by Anaximander himself. These words are rather an expression of a conviction that "the power which presides over physical order is moral."[33] This power is an attribute of the *Apeiron*. The *Apeiron* which governs all things uses this power to exact its moral pronouncements. The physical processes in the world are secondary to the moral nature of the *Apeiron*. Whatever happens in the world is not merely a result of mechanical changes, but a reflection of the moral order inhabiting the *Apeiron*.[34]

Whence this moral order? For Homer, order, including moral order, belongs to the highest level of reality, the level exceeding the world of mortals and immortals – destiny, fate, *moira*.[35] In order for the cosmos to function properly, even the gods have to submit to its ordinances. The moral order is united by Anaximander along with the concept of infinity in the concept of the *Apeiron*, a moral infinity. The divine moral law that rules in human societies becomes the divine principle ordering the course of the entire universe.

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[33] Cornford, *From Religion to Philosophy*, p. 11.

[34] Santillana says that the concept of governing is an expression of "what he meant and could not express – automatic control," Giorgio di Santillana, *The Origins of Scientific Thought* (New York: Mentor Books, 1961), p. 39. Automatic control is rather what he did not mean and could express.

[35] The importance of the *moira* in understanding the origin of philosophy is strongly emphasized by Cornford, *From Religion to Philosophy*, chs. 1–2. See also Ehnmark, *The Idea of God in Homer*, ch. 6.

Anaximander does not tell us more about the nature of the *Apeiron*. We learn from Aristotle that it is of a different nature than water and similar elements (*Phys.* 204b24–29). As a source of all material bodies, it is some kind of a body as well, but it seems best not to attempt to give a more precise description of the *Apeiron*. Anaximander was interested in the nature of divinity and found it the fusion of infinity and moral order. He was not interested in a more definite description of the *Apeiron*, and we may venture to say that he would refuse to give such a description. The best description of the *Apeiron* is in its privative name: something with no limit, and any attempt to be more specific could be considered by him presumptuous. Human means are finite and thus inadequate to describe the infinite. Hence, paradoxically, this privative term "had an advantage of predicating something positive of the *arche* without committing Anaximander to any view of its nature."[36]

It is clear that Anaximander goes further than his teacher by abstracting infinity from eternity and making the infinity itself the *arche*, not a particular, empirically known element. This does not mean the *Apeiron* is a nonmaterial substance. It is as material as everything else – although subtler and so fine that it is imperceptible. But the universe and everything in it is derived from the *Apeiron* through the mechanism of separation. The opposites are separated off from the *Apeiron* to become the material for the world, and the worlds are destroyed into the *Apeiron* (12A9, A10).

The *Apeiron* is not just a physical principle; it governs the universe and uses the principle of justice to oversee the process of generating and perishing. Being eternal, spatially infinite, and rational because of the ability to govern and being a seat of the moral law the *Apeiron* is explicitly called divine; the *Apeiron* is God.

Although Anaximander brings theological thinking to another level, he is not disinterested in physics. It can be claimed that, precisely because his theology was apparently so abstract, Anaximander makes an effort to show that it can be seamlessly connected with physics, that theology can form a basis for physical explanations. In that, physics for Anaximander is secondary to theology – it is used to substantiate theology; physics becomes an afterthought of sorts that is used to make his theology less otherworldly. No such effort is made by Thales because there was not much of a need for it. Thales' theology is strongly rooted in traditional religious thinking and although slightly more abstract than this thinking, it is close to it. Anaximander could not rely on connections with traditional religion; he needed to show that his theology was relevant, and his biological, astronomical, and physical explanations are such attempts. Anaximander proposes the mechanism of separation and destruction in physics to explain the emergence and destruction of physical entities. The separation-destruction mechanism is a physical counterpart of the theological mechanism of what

[36] H.B. Gottschalk, 'Anaximander's apeiron', *Phronesis* 10 (1965), p. 53. "The Boundless represents the unknown entity which encompasses the known world in time as well as in space," Kahn, *Anaximander and the Origin of Greek Cosmology*, p. 237. See also Allan S. Gnagy, 'The *apeiron*: Anaximander's concept of the endless ground of nature', *The Northwest Missouri State University Studies* 35 (1975), no. 2, pp. 16–18. His concept of the *Apeiron* as "the ground of becoming and perishing" is very similar to Walther Kraus's image of the *apeiron* as "der ewige Urquell des Seins," 'Das Wesen des Unendlichen bei Anaximander', *Rheinisches Museum* 93 (1950), p. 378.

can be termed dis-divinization and divinization.[37] The mechanism is also a reflection of the fact that God is transcendent and yet connected to the world. Physical things are parts of the *Apeiron* that acquire their physical individuality by becoming separated from the *Apeiron*. But at the end of their existence, they resolve into the *Apeiron*. Destruction thus amounts to divinization of sorts. Individuality of physical beings is destroyed when the matter from which they are built is reclaimed by the *Apeiron*.

Anaximenes

Anaximenes, a pupil of Anaximander, in the spirit of his Milesian predecessors, also establishes a foundation of the universe with his choice of the *arche*. Unlike Thales, he makes "ἀήρ rather than water, the material principle above the other simple bodies" (Aristotle, *Met.* 984a5 = 13A4). Unlike Anaximander, he "posits a single infinite underlying substance of things," which is not indeterminate in character like Anaximander's, but "determinate calling it *aer*" (Theophrastus *ap.* Simplicius, *In Phys.* 24.26–28 = A5).[38]

What is the nature of *aer*? When evenly distributed, most uniform (ὁμαλώτατος) *aer* is invisible. But "it is revealed by the cold and the hot and the damp and by movement" (Hippolytus, *Ref.* 1.7.2 = A7), that is, motion is a necessary condition of *aer*'s visibility. *Aer* can become a source of all bodies filling the world through the means of the condensation-rarefaction mechanism that makes visible properties that are *in potentia* in *aer*.[39] Its motion triggers the mechanism which, in turn, leads to the emergence of such properties as coldness, hardness, liquidity, and so on. And so, for Anaximenes, "the origin of existing things was *aer*, for from it all things come to be and into it they are resolved again; 'just as our soul (ψυχή)' he says 'which is *aer*, holds us together (συγκρατεῖν), so *pneuma* and *aer* surround (περιέχει) the whole cosmos' (*aer* and *pneuma* are thus used as synonyms)."[40]

Cosmic *aer* surrounds the cosmos, but it is also inside it since everything emerged from *aer*. *Aer* inside the cosmos – atmospheric air – is, as it were, lesser *aer*, lesser than *aer* outside the cosmos. Outer *aer*, *aer* proper, directly corresponds to Anaximander's divine *Apeiron* that oversees and steers the events in the world. Outer *aer* is alive, and

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[37] In a different context, the neologism de-deification has also been proposed, Charles Pichon, *The Vatican and Its Role in World Affairs* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1969 [1946]), p. 64.

[38] Adam Drozdek, 'Anaximenes: theology and physics', *Eranos* 102 (2004), pp. 40–45.

[39] See also Marcel de Corte, 'Anaximène', *Laval théologique et philosophique* 18 (1962), p. 50.

[40] Aetius 1.3.4 = B2. The authenticity of the quotation is questioned because of anachronistic terminology it uses: for example, Aram M. Frenkian, 'Les doxographies et les fragments des Milésiens', *Studii Clasice* 6 (1964), pp. 14–15. However, the late compound word συγκρατεῖν can be considered a rendering of the original "good Presocratic" word κρατεῖν, Karin Alt, 'Zum Satz des Anaximenes über die Seele', *Hermes* 101 (1973), p. 160. It seems that, notwithstanding later terminology used in the quotation, it correctly reflects Anaximenes' views. Cf. Walther Kranz, 'Gleichnis und Vergleich in der frühgriechischen Philosophie', *Hermes* 73 (1938), p. 111; Jaeger, *The Theology of the Early Greek Philosophers*, pp. 207–208 note 62; Walter Bröcker, *Die Geschichte der Philosophie vor Sokrates* (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1965), p. 20.

this life is transferred to the world that becomes a living entity whose soul, the world soul, is cosmic *aer* that encompasses it. Thus, unlike the human soul, the world soul, that is, cosmic *aer*, is outside cosmic body, but it plays the same role as the human soul. As humans live due to their inner souls, so does the cosmos due to the world soul which is also the principle of being, the matrix of the universe, the life giver and maintainer.[41] In his view of the world soul outside the cosmic body, Anaximenes is a forerunner of Plato for whom world soul covers the body of the world on the outside and all that is corporeal is inside it (*Timaeus* 34b, 36de).

Can any mental attributes be ascribed to *aer*? Because the soul is *aer*, it is hardly conceivable that if the soul could have mental life, such life could be absent from cosmic *aer*. Intelligibility can be seen in *aer* also from the existence of the cosmos. The cosmos is a result of transformations of parts of *aer* through condensation and rarefaction, but it is hardly credible that Anaximenes would have seen the chain of such transformations to be the result of accidental condensations and rarefactions. The reliance on accidental changes comes with the atomists who claim not to rely on any overseeing principle.[42] However, Anaximander already said that the *Apeiron* governs all things and Anaximenes could very easily have stated that the particular sequence of condensations and rarefactions is due to *aer*.

Aer is the infinite *arche*, the source of everything, including life; it surrounds and holds everything together, eternal and eternally in motion. With such attributes, *aer* has a divine character and Anaximenes himself considered *aer* to be God (Aetius 1.7.13 = A10; Minucius Felix, *Octavius* 19.5) and God to be *aer* (Cicero, *ND* 1.26 = A10).[43]

For Anaximenes, the soul and thus life is *Aer*. As such, *Aer* is not only the seat of life, but also – and primarily – the seat of intelligibility. The soul is the seat of life, but not just of any life, but human life, that is, the center of a being that is able to reason. This attribute, which is implicit in the *Apeiron* but does not seem to constitute *Apeiron*'s divinity, becomes a defining attribute of *Aer*. What is divine in humans is life, and to a larger extent, their mind, their mental faculties. This will become more explicit in Anaxagoras with his divine *Nous*, Diogenes of Apollonia with his divine

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[41] The problem can also be solved by stating that the alleged quotation in B2 is a major reinterpretation of the original view that "in its original state his *arche* was coextensive with the developed universe" and that "the περιέχον is internal and acts from inside the universe," Peter J. Bicknell, 'Τὸ ἄπειρον, ἄπειρος ἀήρ, and τὸ περιέχον', *Acta Classica* 9 (1966), pp. 33, 37.

[42] The law of necessity is, in fact, such a principle in Democritus and the *isonomia* principle, in Epicurus.

[43] In Cicero's statement, "Anaximenes proposed that God is *aer*, that he is created (*gigni*) and immeasurable and infinite and always in motion" (Cicero, *De natura deorum* (*ND*) 1.26 = A10), *gigni* is an obvious mistake. It can be attributed to malicious insertion by Velleius the Epicurean who gives this statement in a very strongly polemical context (Wyttenbach) or as the result of confusing the created gods with God-*Aer* (Krische). To consider God as created "and namely from that what he himself already was in his uncreated essence is the most absurd thing that could be imposed on Greek philosophy," Krische, *Die theologischen Lehren der griechischen Denker*, p. 55. The claim that *gigni* refers only to "the air substance that fills the cosmos," as asserted by Otto Gilbert, *Griechische Religionsphilosophie* (Leipzig: Engelmann, 1911; reprint, Hildesheim: Olms, 1973), p. 27 note 1, is indefensible.

and explicitly rational *Aer*,[44] and Heraclitus and the Stoics with their divine Logos. Life is the first stage, and that is where Thales ended. The mind is the second stage. Anaximander's divinity is intelligible but too abstract; therefore, Anaximenes chooses *Aer* to bring Thales closer to Anaximander. *Aer* is as *Apeiron*-like as possible but, as it were, more tangible than *Apeiron*, though less tangible than water. Still, Anaximenes himself recognizes that there is a finer element than *Aer*, namely fire, and the latter element will be later chosen as the material embodiment of God by Heraclitus and the Stoics. In this, like in Anaximander, rationality is abstracted from its this-worldly setting, which is *aer*, and transferred to another substrate. Anaximenes was, in that respect, more consistent by couching rationality on the cosmic scale in the same setting as in humans, in *aer*. This may be considered as sowing seeds of philosophy of man, which would make the Milesian philosophy not as entirely immersed in grand issues of ontology and cosmogony as commonly understood.

For Anaximenes, the condensation-rarefaction mechanism becomes the underlying physical process. In that, everything in the world becomes a manifestation of divine *Aer*, everything is to some extent divine. Theology becomes semi-pantheistic (or semi-transcendent). God is *Aer*, *aer* in purest form, and is clearly separate from the world by being present at its peripheries. But the world never loses its divine origin. The world is, as it were, a less divine side of God. If theology is stressed, Anaximenes' God is transcendent; if physics is accentuated, his God is immanent. However, because physics is the other side of theology, the condensation-rarefaction mechanism has its theological counterpart in the mechanism of increase or decrease of divine purity, of God's unmediated presence. Since theology and physics are intertwined, God's transcendence is not absolute because God in a large measure is also immanent.

[44] The ascription of rationality to *Aer* by Diogenes is sometimes considered to be a direct proof that Anaximenes did the same, Leo Sweeney, *Infinity in the Presocratics* (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1972), p. 68.

Chapter 2

Xenophanes and One God

Xenophanes, a poet who lived in the sixth century BC, is known primarily for his sharp criticism of the anthropomorphism of the traditional religion, and this very fact makes him, in the eyes of many, a reformer of religion. Very early on, it was also thought that his reformation went further, not only to removing anthropomorphic aspects of traditional mythology, but also to proposing monotheism.

Critique of anthropomorphism

The problem of monotheistic views of Xenophanes is not free from controversy. There is no doubt that he criticized traditional views on what were the gods of mythology and how they were represented primarily in the works of Homer and Hesiod: "Homer and Hesiod ascribed to the gods all [acts] that are to people disgraceful and shameful: stealing, committing adultery, and deceiving one another" (SE (Sextus Empiricus, Adversus mathematicos) 9.193 = B11, SE 1.289 = B12). He states that "mortals think that the gods are born, wear cloth, and have voice and body" (Clement, *Strom.* 5.109.2 = B14). In particular, "Ethiopians say that their gods have snub noses and are black; Thracians – that they have blue eyes and red hair" (Clement, *Strom.* 7.22.1 = B16). Similarly, as Xenophanes remarks caustically, "if horses and oxen or lions had hands or could draw with their limbs and create works like men, then horses would draw the shapes of the gods similar to horses, the oxen – similar to oxen and they would give them the form they themselves have" (Clement, *Strom.* 5.109.3 = B15). People see the gods in their own image and so would animals if they were capable of it. In popular opinion, the gods not only resemble people physically, but also their behavior in many cases does not differ much from people's behavior, including immoral and cruel deeds. There are, however, and there should be, some dissimilarities.

The gods differ from people, first of all, in respect to immortality. Also, there are acts that do not befit the gods. For Xenophanes, the gods' perfection is an assumption, and this perfection encompasses not only the infinity of their existence but also their moral perfection.[1] This is confirmed by Simplicius who reconstructs Xenophanes' reasoning, beginning with the assumption that "God is strongest and best (ἄριστος) of all" (*In Phys.* 22.32–33 = A31), and by pseudo-Aristotle who says that God is "strongest and best (βέλτιστος)" (*Melissos, Xenophanes, Gorgias* 977b27–28 = A28). The assumption is not new. When Anaximander says that the processes in nature take place because some things emerge and others perish since they "pay penalty and retribution

[1] J.H. Lesher, Commentaries, in Xenophanes, *Fragments* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992), p. 83.

to each other for their injustice" (12B1), then it is difficult to deny that justice, that is, moral law, resides in the divine principle of all things, in the *Apeiron.* This divine *Apeiron* encompasses the moral law, moral perfection, which rules the world and is the law through which *Apeiron* directs the world (12A15). Considering the divine to be perfect, including moral perfection, can later be found in Plato (*Euthyphro* 5e–6a; *Rep.* 379b) and in Aristotle (*Met.* 1072b25–27).

As to the gods' immortality, Homer and Hesiod many times call the gods "the always existing (αἰεί ἐόντες)." When taken literally, the gods, in spite of Homer and Hesiod who write about gods being born, are not only immortal but also unborn. Therefore, presenting the gods as born, primarily in the *Theogony*, is against the idea of divinity.[2] When "the mortals think that the gods are born," they distort the image of the gods and are deluding themselves.

Demythologization of nature

It is clear that Xenophanes tries to remove mythological additions from the image of the gods, but in his pronouncements another tendency can be seen, namely the demythologization of natural phenomena.

Traditionally, the rain was considered to be Zeus' manifestation and sometimes the phrase "Zeus rains (ὕει)" (*Il.* 12.25; *Od.* 14.457; *Op.* 488; Herodotus 2.13) was used. Also, winds were thought to be gods (*Il.* 23.194; *Th.* 380). Similarly with rivers, whose father was Okeanos (*Il.* 21.190; *Th.* 337, 367–368). When Xenophanes says that "the sea is the source of water and wind, ... the great sea is the parent (γενέτωρ) of clouds, winds, and rivers" (Aetius 3.4.4 = B30), he is opposing the mythological view of the sea. According to Hesiod, the sea is the father of the gods (*Th.* 232–239). However, because the gods are unborn, the sea cannot be their parent. But this view of Xenophanes does not have to be equal to pure naturalism. For Homer, Okeanos is the source of rivers, the sea, all sources, and deep wells (*Il.* 21.195–197), which does not contradict the divine character of Okeanos. However, Xenophanes seems to be more concerned about not identifying natural phenomena with the gods. If the sea is considered to be a god, then, paradoxically, it is not a sea, not an element of nature. What constitutes the divine character of the sea exceeds physical nature. Similarly, "the one they call Iris, is by its nature a cloud that is seen as purple, reddish, and yellow" (B32). The messenger Iris (*Il.* 2.786), often identified with the rainbow, is but a cloud. What is seen in nature and is identified with Iris is a natural phenomenon. "The one they call Iris" is only an element of nature. Iris, we can add, if she is a goddess, is certainly not a rainbow; her reality goes beyond the natural, and her essence is not to be found in natural phenomena. A doxographic testimony also states that, according to Xenophanes, the sun is made out of fiery clouds (Aetius 2.20.3 = A40), is born from the clouds (Eusebius, *Praep. ev.* 1.8.4 = A32), and is born each day (Hippolytus, *Ref.* 1.14.3 = A33); and so, because of at least one reason, the sun cannot be a god – it comes into being.

[2] Cf. Lesher, Commentaries, 87; Ernst Heitsch, Commentaries, in Xenophanes, *Die Fragmente* (Munich: Artemis Verlag, 1983), p. 128.

It is sometimes said that in these views Xenophanes is a physicist who analyzes natural phenomena in the spirit of the Ionian philosophers with a possible admixture of sarcasm directed against traditional mythology.[3] However, although it is true that in his statements there is a polemic tendency against mythological understanding of physical phenomena,[4] the statements themselves do not mean that Xenophanes rejects religion. The correct explanation of natural phenomena is not tantamount to the rejection of religion in general, but it is the means to the restoration of its proper status. The gods should not be treated on a par with the phenomena of nature and considered as part of nature. Natural phenomena have a beginning and end; physical objects change one into another. This cannot be reconciled with the eternal nature of the gods. Even seemingly immutable phenomena, such as the existence of the sun, are just an appearance of eternity since the sun comes into being every day and it is really a cloud, and only a few things are less lasting than a cloud. If we assume that the gods exist, then they are outside the natural phenomena. Possibly, there exists a connection between gods' activities and the course of natural phenomena, but the knowledge about this is beyond our reach. We can suspect that such a connection exists, and in this sense the connection between the force of the sea and the "living and divine force" mentioned in Xenophanes' statement about the sea (B30) is not incorrect.[5] Xenophanes is interested in theological questions not only when he says something about the gods in the context of religion, but also when he refers to them in the context of discussing nature. The problem with the traditional theology is that these two domains were confused, which not only did not help in giving satisfactory explanations of natural phenomena, but also diminished significantly the status of religion in individual and social life. Can anyone truly have a reverential attitude toward the gods who are merely forms of water or cloud; to the gods, whose nature resembles the nature of other living beings; to the gods, who behave like other nondivine beings that we see around us? If not, then, on the one hand, a scientific effort must be made to develop a naturalistic explanation of natural phenomena. On the other hand, a theological effort must be made to remove from the concept of the divine the attributes that do not befit it.

To see to what extent the sphere of nature and the sphere of the extranatural can be connected, we have to look closer at the theological statements of Xenophanes.

God and the gods

The statements that are striking among the extant theological fragments of Xenophanes refer to God, which raises the problem of reconciling them with his statements about the gods.

Xenophanes says that there is "one God (εἷς θεός), greatest among gods and men, similar to mortals neither in form nor in thought" (Clement, *Strom.* 5.109.1 = B23), who "sees as a

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[3] Lesher, Commentaries, 135.

[4] Adolf Lumpe, *Die Philosophie des Xenophanes von Kolophon* (Munich: Foth, 1952), p. 39.

[5] Karl Deichgräber, 'Xenophanes περὶ φύσεως', *Rheinisches Museum* 87 (1938), p. 7; according to Christian Schäfer *Xenophanes von Kolophon* (Stuttgart: Teubner, 1996), p. 139, fr. B30 is about "the sacredness of the sea."

whole, thinks as a whole, and hears as a whole" (SE 9.144 = B24), "but without any effort he shakes everything with his mind (νόου φρενί)" (Simplicius, *In Phys.* 23.20 = B25), and "he always remains in the same [place], not moving and it is unbecoming that he moves to various [places] at various times" (Simplicius, *In Phys.* 23.11–12 = B26).

First of all, there is a disagreement about the interpretation of the phrase *heis theos*. It is often assumed that *heis* is just a reinforcement of the adjective in the superlative, "greatest."[6] But the distance between *heis* and *megistos* makes this interpretation much less likely: in such a construction, between *heis* and a word in the superlative, there are at most two words,[7] whereas in B23 there are six words between *heis* and *megistos*. It seems that *heis* is used here not attributively, but predicatively, which can be marked by using a comma after *heis theos*. In the first case, B23 should be translated as: "One God [is] greatest among gods and men ...;" in the other case, "One [and only] God, greatest among gods and men ..." Clement of Alexandria, who quotes the fragment as an expression of Xenophanes' monotheism (*Strom.* 5.109.1), understood B23 predicatively.

When monotheistic interpretation of B23 is accepted, there is a striking contradiction between the uniqueness of God and the statement that he is "greatest among gods and men." But, as observed by Wilamowitz, only "ignorance of language causes that a contradiction is here seen with Xenophanes' monotheism," because the phrase is used mainly to stress the status of God and should not be taken literally, and thus it means as much as "greatest as only can be imagined."[8]

Theological fragments list several attributes of God. God is incomparable with people and with their anthropomorphic gods in respect to form and thinking (B23); he thinks without any mediation (B24); he is at rest (B26), and unborn (B14). Fr. B24 is about God's cognition. Human cognition is limited by sensory organs, and thus, for example, only a part of man hears. Divine cognition in unmediated and God hears and thinks as a whole, under the condition that he is a simple, uncompounded being. Xenophanes saw God as a being who has consciousness and personality[9] although his thinking is different from man's. It is stated that fr. B24 suggests God's omniscience,[10]

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[6] Lumpe, *Die Philosophie des Xenophanes von Kolophon*, pp. 27–28; Michael C. Stokes, *One and Many in Presocratic Philosophy* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1971), p. 77; J.P. Hershbell, 'The oral-poetic religion of Xenophanes', in K. Robb (ed.), *Language and Thought in Early Greek Philosophy* (La Salle: The Hegeler Institute, 1983), p. 130; Lesher, Commentaries, p. 96.

[7] Daniel Babut, 'Sur la 'théologie' de Xénophane', *Revue philosophique* 164 (1974), p. 404 note 3.

[8] Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, Commentaries, in Euripides, *Herakles* (Berlin: Weidmann, 1895), vol. 2, p. 231.

[9] Lumpe, *Die Philosophie des Xenophanes von Kolophon*, p. 18; Werner Jaeger, *The Theology of the Early Greek Philosophers* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1947), p. 44.

[10] Deichgräber, 'Xenophanes περὶ φύσεως', p. 27; Lesher, Commentaries, p. 106. Deichgräber, p. 26, says that in B24, "Xenophanes does not simply refer to God, who encompasses all with his knowledge, but about God's nature, his *Ganzheit* and he develops from here, that is, from the uniqueness of his being, the idea of omniscience. God is ὅλος, his knowledge is due to the fact that he is not limited by the organs of cognition, which can function only when they are spatially limited".

which is not convincing. It was a common belief that the gods were omniscient, and Xenophanes was certainly not opposed to that idea, but there is no clear statement which would unambiguously indicate that he did believe in the divine omniscience.

Fr. B25 states that God shakes (κραδαίνει) everything, which is an allusion to the activity of Zeus, who shakes Olympus by the nod of his head (*Il.* 1.530) or when sitting down on the throne (*Il.* 8.443).[11] Thus, God is immovable, but moves everything, the entire world – he is the cause of motion. This is a rational and planned activity. Although the activity of shaking may not suggest it,[12] the phrase *noou phreni* indicates it (although there remains a problem of an exact meaning of the phrase); φρήν refers to the mind, heart, breast, intelligence, organ of thinking and of emotion; also νόος refers to the mind and the ability to think, and thus the phrase *noou phreni* literally means "with the mind of his mind."[13] Usually, two different words are used in translation, for example, "by the thought of his mind,"[14] or "by the power of his mind."[15] Also, the volitional element in the phrase is stressed and thus the phrase *noou phreni* expresses "the perfect correspondence between the divine will and its realization,"[16] and fr. B25 says that "God shakes the world with his active will (or impulse) derived from thought which permeates all."[17] There is no doubt that God shapes the cosmos in a planned manner with the power of his mind, and so, when associated with the phrase *noou phreni*, the action of shaking the cosmos is comparable to the action of steering, which Anaximander ascribes to the *Apeiron*, and Parmenides ascribes to the goddess (29B12.3); it can also be compared to the action of governing that Heraclitus ascribes to the thunderbolt (22B64).

In one place, Xenophanes says that "if God did not make (ἔφυσε) yellow honey, [people] would consider figs much sweeter" (Herodian, Περὶ μονήρους λέξεος 41, 946.23–24 = B38). Most often, the fragment is discussed in the context of Xenophanes' epistemology, but it is noteworthy that, in Xenophanes' opinion, God made honey and, which is understood, the figs as well. Thus, the activity of making honey undoubtedly requires planning and it can be viewed as a particular instance of the action of shaking. And so shaking the cosmos, or all things, can be manifested as a planned action to bring something into being. Also, the phrase "God made" should not be taken literally since this is a conventional epic style, just as other elements in B38, and it is very unlikely that Xenophanes and his contemporaries thought that the

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[11] It is said that the use of the verb κραδαίνειν is as much dictated by the desire to define the way God acts as it is an allusion to a traditional representation, Babut, 'Sur la 'théologie' de Xénophane', p. 427.

[12] Lesher, Commentaries, p. 107.

[13] Hermann Fränkel does not shrink from such a translation in his *Early Greek Poetry and Philosophy* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1975), p. 331 note 11.

[14] W.A. Heidel, 'Hecataeus and Xenophanes', *American Journal of Philology* 64 (1943), p. 275; G.S. Kirk, J.E. Raven, and M. Schofield, *The Presocratic Philosophers* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 170; Lesher, Commentaries, 106.

[15] Jaeger, *The Theology of the Early Greek Philosophers*, p. 45; "mit des Geistes Denkkraft," Hermann Diels and Walther Kranz, *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker* (Berlin: Weidmann 1952), B25.

[16] Babut, 'Sur la 'théologie' de Xénophane', p. 423.

[17] Heitsch, Commentaries, p. 156.

divine being "made" honey (or anything else) the way Plato's Demiurge did.[18] The details of how God did make honey are not known, and quite certainly the action of Xenophanes' God is less refined than the action of the Demiurge as presented in the *Timaeus*, but it is important that both Xenophanes' God and Plato's Demiurge are rational beings who mold the world through their purposeful actions.

In B26, Xenophanes says that God remains in the same place because changing place is unbecoming for God. There are attributes that cannot be ascribed to God since they are contradictory to his nature. Divinity is thus associated not only with moral perfection, but also with immutability. God is eternal – unborn and immortal, and so his existence does not change. God would not move since this would signify presence of imperfection in God: by changing place, God would move toward a place from which he is absent, and so he would satisfy the need of finding himself where he currently is not.[19] The divine essence coincides with divine dignity, with what befits God. What befits God constitutes his essence, and perfection is the center of his essence from which is inferred his moral perfection and perfection understood as having no needs, including the need to change location.

If Xenophanes is viewed as a believer in monotheism, how can this be reconciled with his statements about the gods? On the one hand, Xenophanes says that God is one and has control over the universe; on the other hand, he has pronouncements about the gods, who should not be seen as committing immoral deeds. In this way, he can easily be viewed as a polytheist, which is frequently the case.

In B1, which is a poem that describes a religious feast, an altar in the middle of a room is described. However, an altar in a private house is not a normal occurrence in Greece. It seems that B1 describes a feast in honor of a particular deity which takes place in a building erected for religious purposes. The altar is in the center and thus seems to play a central role. There is no bloody offering, only an offering of flowers. The table described in the poem is not a normal table for eating but an offering table. The purification rituals at the beginning of B1 and the advice given to the participants indicate that the songs and the feast have a ritual character.[20] It is very likely that the feast is a gathering of sages.[21]

In the poem B1, Xenophanes says: "praise the man who when drinking, brings to light noble [deeds] as memory and striving for virtue [serves him]. He deals neither with the battles of Titans nor Giants nor Centaurs, old stories, nor cruel fights [since] there is nothing useful in them; but it is always good to have regard for the gods" (Athenaeus, *Deipnosophistae* 462c = B1.19–24). Two criteria, mentioned by Xenophanes, are important, namely usefulness and regard for the gods. When considering only the utilitarian criterion in analysis of the poem, it can be said that

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[18] Daniel Babut, 'L'idée de progrès et la relativité du savoir humain selon Xénophane (fragments 18 et 38 D-K)', *Revue de Philologie* 51 (1977), p. 225.

[19] Lumpe says that denying God locomotion "is the conclusion from his infinite perfection," Lumpe, *Die Philosophie des Xenophanes von Kolophon*, p. 18.

[20] Jean Defradas, 'Le banquet de Xénophane', *Revue des Études Grecques* 75 (1962), pp. 353. 355; Gilbert François, *Le Polythéisme et l'emploi au singulier des mots θεός, δαίμων dans la littérature greque d'Homère à Platon* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1957), p. 170.

[21] Hans Herter, 'Das Symposion des Xenophanes', *Wiener Studien* 69 (1956), pp. 47–48; Defradas, 'Le banquet de Xénophane', pp. 347, 353, 357.

the expression "old stories" (B1.22) is a rhetoric expression since the critique of myths is based neither on their antiquity nor their falsehood. The tales of conflicts (B1.23) are useless not because they are false, but because they are bad examples.[22] In B12, Xenophanes criticizes songs about "lawless divine deeds," and so he does not criticize all myths for their anthropomorphism, that is, for their falsehood; therefore, Aristotle's words about tales about gods which "can be wrong as Xenophanes thinks" (*Poetics* 1460b36–1461a1) should be taken as referring not to all tales about gods, but only to those that should be passed over in silence.

Although all anthropomorphic myths are false, they are not necessarily bad.[23] Although utilitarianism is undoubtedly a part of Xenophanes' argument, this argument should not be reduced to mere utilitarianism.[24] When Xenophanes says that "there is nothing useful in them; but it is always good to have regard for the gods," he seems to treat the utilitarian criterion interchangeably with the criterion that refers to holding the gods in high regard. Would the quoted statement have any meaning if the gods were to be treated only as fictions? Why would it be necessary to hold fiction in high regard? For Xenophanes, the tales about Titans' battles are useless since it is difficult to see in them anything honorable about the gods, for these tales are about immoral deeds of the gods and demigods. The tales are useless since they are in conflict with the proper understanding of the divine; that is, they falsify the image of God. The character and form of religious practices – such as the feast described in fr. B1 – are determined by the proper understanding of religion. Realism determines pragmatism, not vice versa.

However, this realism concerns the existence of one God. Xenophanes' monotheism contradicts the polytheism of the Greeks of his times, although, according to Xenophanes, this polytheism was not altogether false; therefore, he does not call for the renunciation of polytheism, but for rectification of the image of the gods present in religious consciousness and practices. The gods are beings of a different category than humans: they are immortal, their knowledge is wider and deeper than humans', and they are more powerful than humans. However, people also ascribe to them also other attributes, such as moving from one place to another: although they moved faster than humans, they were in motion, which is unbecoming of a divinity. They also acted in a way which was shameful even to humans. If such anthropomorphic additions are removed from the concept of the divine, it will be clear that we are dealing with the reality that exceeds the reality of particular gods, with the reality of one, omnipotent, and eternal God. The gods are fictions as far as they do not exist autonomously; as much as they are human notions about the reality

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[22] Michael Eisenstadt, 'Xenophanes' proposed reform of Greek religion', *Hermes* 102 (1974), pp. 144–145.

[23] Ibid., p. 146.

[24] This is probably the case with the problems of philosophy of nature. Aetius says that for Xenophanes, "the sun is useful for the generation and sustenance of the cosmos and of living beings in it, but the moon is redundant" (2.30.8 = A42). It can be argued that redundancy of the moon refers to "the generation and sustenance of the cosmos and of living beings in it"; as regards other matters the moon is not redundant, for instance, for aesthetic reasons. Hermann Fränkel, 'Xenophanesstudien', *Hermes* 60 (1925), p. 183, considers fr. A42 to be an expression of the most sober and the most radical rationalism.

of God who stands behind them; as much as they are windows which allow for an insight into the reality of the absolute, One God; as much as they are manifestations of the reality which cannot be comprehended by mortals who use a partial image, an image of the gods.[25] Therefore, the first step for the religious reform proposed by Xenophanes is to give to the gods what is the gods', that is, to remove from the concept of the gods everything that does not belong to them, thus discarding anthropomorphism as an attempt to see what gods are. A second step is to realize that the gods are only manifestations of the true, only God and rendering to him what is his through religious practices such as singing hymns (B1.13).[26]

Knowledge of the gods

Xenophanes discusses the problem of how God should be presented. However, the question should be asked about the origin of the knowledge of God. In one fragment Xenophanes says: "and clear truth no man has seen (ἴδεν),[27] nor will be anyone knowing (εἰδώς) about the gods and about what I say about all things, for even if, in the best case, he succeeded to say something about what happened, he himself does not

[25] "What is divine, explains Xenophanes, cannot come into being nor pass away, so eternal, ungenerated, and imperishable effects [of activities of God] appear as beings that he very well could call *theoi*," J. Freudenthal, *Über die Theologie des Xenophanes* (Breslau: Kröbner, 1886), p. 28. The gods represent God since their essence is the same, but the oneness of God distinguished him from the gods. "One God is present in them all since they – his manifestations in the world – are equal to him in all, but he is more that the sum of all gods, for he is One." Thus people see him in the gods who are concretization of abstract and universal God and not abstractions from the forces of nature, Walter Pötscher, 'Zu Xenophanes, frgm. 23', *Emerita* 32 (1964), pp. 6, 9, 10; Walter Pötscher, *Strukturprobleme der aristotelischen und theophrastischen Gottesvorstellung* (Leiden: Brill, 1970), pp. 31, 55, 99; "Xenophanes accepted only one divine entity; the men of his time postulated *theoi*. When Xenophanes uses the plural, *theoi*, he refers to the action of his *theos* but speaks in a way familiar to his listeners," Shirley M. Darcus, 'The *phren* of the *noos* in Xenophanes' God', *Symbolae Osloenses* 53 (1978), p. 35. To some extent this opinion is shared by Hershbell, 'The oral-poetic religion of Xenophanes', p. 131, when he says that Xenophanes' attack was directed not as much against polytheism as against anthropomorphism and that in frs. B23 and B34 he talks about natural phenomena considered to be gods; these phenomena are manifestations of One God or the cosmos itself.

[26] "No one can doubt that Xenophanes actually prays to his god," says Werner Jaeger, 'Xenophanes and the beginnings of natural theology', in A.A. Roback (ed.), *The Albert Schweitzer Jubilee Book* (Cambridge: Sci-art, 1945), p. 407. Eisenstadt, 'Xenophanes' proposed reform of Greek religion', p. 148, claims that one cannot pray to God the same way as to the Olympian gods since he is nameless; but God in B1.13 is also nameless and yet one should sing hymns to him "with reverent words and pure speech" (B1.14). It was suggested that the fragment refers to the hymn to Dionysus, just as this can be found in Ion of Chios (fr. 1, Diehl), but this is unlikely since Xenophanes criticizes anthropomorphism and it is difficult to imagine that he recommends that the participant of the feast should sing hymns to false gods, Defradas, 'Le banquet de Xénophane', p. 356. Cf. P.A. Meijer, 'Philosophers, intellectuals and religion in Hellas', in H.S. Versnel (ed.), *Faith, hope and worship* (Leiden: Brill, 1981), pp. 233–234.

[27] Plutarch has γένετ', Sextus Empiricus has ἴδεν three times and Diogenes Laertius once, which is retained as *lectio difficilior*, Fränkel, Xenophanesstudien, 185.

know (οἶδε) [it]; but opinion is attached to all" (SE 7.49 = B34). What is the source of Xenophanes' knowledge of God? To avoid a contradiction between B34 and B23–26, it can be assumed that B34 is not a statement about Xenophanes, but about other people;[28] however, there still remains the problem of Xenophanes' source of knowledge.

The problem can be solved by properly defining knowledge which is mentioned in fr. B34. It is said that ἴδεν, εἰδώς and οἶδε, as different forms of the same verb, refer to knowledge that is the result of perception. Only knowledge based on experience is certain. Absolute knowledge cannot be reconciled with human knowledge precisely because this knowledge is about earthly things. Phenomena observed in the sky have no divine character because they are empirically observable phenomena. In this way, Xenophanes separates the natural from the extranatural.[29] But this does not solve the problem of the origin of knowledge. It could be supposed that the knowledge of God can only be negative: we cannot say who God is since positive knowledge is of an empirical character. If people truly know anything, they know it from experience; otherwise, their knowledge is but an opinion. If so, the theological statements of Xenophanes are devoid of force. Also, Xenophanes uses the word οἶδα in fr. B8.4 and it would be difficult to understand it as "I see" rather than "I know."

It is also said that when Xenophanes says in B34 that it is impossible to have knowledge about gods, he is referring to meteorological phenomena which traditionally were called the gods. The expression "about the gods and about what I say about all things" should be taken as an archaic description of meteorology.[30] This is, however, trivialization of the problem since, in this way, other fragments about the gods should also be viewed from the meteorological stance. In what sense would God be greatest among the gods, that is, meteorological phenomena? Would God also be such a phenomenon? Why is this phenomenon not mentioned? And what would be the meaning of the critique of immoral behavior of such gods or an encouragement to honor them?

It seems that Xenophanes could claim his special insight in things divine as due to an inspiration that comes directly from God. After all, Xenophanes was a poet and the call of the poets for a divine inspiration was not extraordinary, which we can see from the fact that Hesiod calls on the Muses to help him sing and from the example of Parmenides who pronounced truths revealed to him by a goddess. However, in the extant fragments, Xenophanes makes no such reference to divine inspiration, which, to be sure, does not mean that such a call for divine help was not made. Fr. B18 says that "not from the beginning the gods revealed to the mortals all things, but in time,

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[28] Jürgen Wiesner, 'Wissen und Skepsis bei Xenophanes', *Hermes* 125 (1997), p. 24.

[29] Fränkel, 'Xenophanesstudien', pp. 186–187, 191–192; cf. Karl Reinhardt, *Parmenides und die Geschichte der griechischen Philosophie* (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1977 [1916]), pp. 116–118.

[30] Aryeh Finkelberg, 'Studies in Xenophanes', *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 93 (1990), p. 147 note 101. In similar direction leads the opinion that the observations of periodic phenomena in nature (for example, the phases of the moon, the four seasons, the ebb and flow of tides) result in the view that there is a Greatest Period which encompasses other periods as the lowest common multiple, in the form of a period of periods, H.A.T. Reiche, 'Empirical aspects of Xenophanes' theology', in J.P. Anton and G.L. Kustas (eds), *Essays in Ancient Greek Philosophy* (Albany: State University of New York, 1971), p. 96.

to the ones searching to discover what is better" (Stobaeus 1.8.2). That is, the gods enable the access to knowledge potentially to everyone, but one has to be a searcher to acquire such knowledge. The gods make acquiring knowledge possible, open the door to it, but without a desire to enter this door, knowledge remains inaccessible. The gods are, as the poets say, "the givers of the good" (*Od.* 8.325; *Th.* 46), but the gift of knowledge needs to be looked for to become accessible to mortals. Also, knowledge is acquired in a proper social atmosphere. In B2, Xenophanes criticizes exaggerated praise for the sports and athletes. Physical strength, he says, is of little value to rule a city and even for effectiveness in a battle.[31] A conducive social atmosphere is needed to create proper needs – the need for knowledge and the need for its discovery, which, thanks to the gods' help, can become a reality.

Monotheism

Although Xenophanes is frequently viewed as a reformer of religion,[32] sometimes his reformation is reduced to a side effect of the main goal by statements that Xenophanes was less interested in creating new theology than in the correction of errors of his predecessors, primarily Homer and Hesiod.[33] God's attributes were adumbrated and even described by Xenophanes' predecessors, but Xenophanes for the first time systematically grouped them and built a consistent system from them.[34] However, it is sometimes said that it is unjustified to see a system in which there is no system because there is really no systematic connection between Xenophanes' statements.[35] It is difficult to judge by the extant fragments whether it was a tightly built system or a collection of loosely connected statements, but there is no doubt that, based on these fragments, a philosophico-theological system can be constructed.

Was Xenophanes a monotheist? No answer to this question may be given when it is claimed that the problem of distinguishing monotheism from polytheism is important in Judaism and in Christian theology, but for the Greeks, it was an unimportant issue.[36] If so, however, more interesting is the problem of how novel Xenophanes' pronouncements were. He was often considered a monotheist, particularly in the nineteenth century. We can thus read that "Xenophanes constitutes a pinnacle in the development of monotheism rising with a solitary greatness above belief of classical and Hellenistic era,"[37] that he wrote about the one and only God, like Moses;[38] that he is a defender of

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[31] This problem is discussed by Konrat Ziegler, 'Xenophanes von Kolophon, ein Revolutionär des Geistes', *Gymnasium* 72 (1965), pp. 289–302.

[32] Peter Steinmetz, 'Xenophanesstudien', *Rheinisches Museum* 109 (1966), p. 69; Jaeger, *The Theology of the Early Greek Philosophers*, p. 53, Fränkel, *Early Greek poetry and philosophy*, p. 328.

[33] Babut, 'Sur la 'théologie' de Xénophane', pp. 424, 439.

[34] Ibid., 425.

[35] Steinmetz, 'Xenophanesstudien', p. 68.

[36] Babut, 'Sur la 'théologie' de Xénophane', 407; Fränkel, *Early Greek Poetry and Philosophy*, p. 332.

[37] H. Diels, 'Über Xenophanes', *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie* 10 (1897), p. 535.

[38] C.M. Rechenberg, *Entwickelung des Gottesbegriffes in der griechischen Philosophie* (Leipzig: Rossberg, 1872), pp. 17-18.

the "purest and most noble theism";[39] and that his theology represents the purest form of monotheism.[40] Today, more often it is believed that Xenophanes was a polytheist,[41] although even today it is sometimes stated that he was a monotheist, after all.[42]

Xenophanes represents a vision which, in a more or less clear form, can be found in many ancient thinkers. However, he expresses it more strongly than others. He criticizes mythological tradition for its anthropomorphism and prosaic character. He thus rectifies the concept of the divine by removing from it anthropomorphic accretions. In this sense, he is dependent on Homer and Hesiod.[43] However, he goes further by proposing a vision of religion which goes beyond the imagery of the epic tradition and, although the problem of separation of the material from the spiritual sphere was not stated by Xenophanes (this begins with Anaxagoras), he was very close to the extramaterial and extranatural treatment of religion. By considering the gods as manifestations of God, he does not completely reject traditional religion, but points to its incompleteness:[44] it is incomplete not only because of its anthropomorphism but also because of not seeing One God behind the gods. The latter have no autonomous reality by being only reflections of the absolute reality. Therefore, their reality, on the one hand – when rejecting natural attributes that are ascribed to them – dissolves in natural phenomena, on the other hand, in the reality of God, whose manifestations and imperfect representations they are. Just as for Anaximander stars are fire showing through openings in the sky, and thus, they really did not exist, so Xenophanes' gods do not exist by being partial light of the reality of God. In this sense, it is difficult to consider Xenophanes for anything else but a monotheist.

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[39] Victor Cousin, *Nouveaux fragments philosophiques* (Paris: Pichon et Didier, 1828), p. 62.

[40] Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, *Die griechische und lateinische Literatur und Sprache* (Berlin: Teubner, 1905), p. 38.

[41] Lumpe, *Die Philosophie des Xenophanes von Kolophon*, pp. 27-28; Jaeger, *The theology of the early Greek philosophers*, pp. 44-45; Pötscher, 'Zu Xenophanes, frgm. 23', p. 12; Schäfer, *Xenophanes von Kolophon*, p. 167, however, already Freudenthal says that Xenophanes did no completely renounce polytheism, *Über die Theologie des Xenophanes*, pp. 10, 17.

[42] Steinmetz, 'Xenophanesstudien', p. 72, says that Xenophanes did not become a monotheist under the influence of the Pythagoreans and the Orphics, whose views he criticized (DL 8.36 = B7), but his monotheism was his original creation.

[43] Heitsch, Commentaries, pp. 150–151.

[44] Therefore, it would be difficult to agree with the opinion that "his idea of 'god' has nothing to do with any image or concept of religious thinking and never becomes a motto of a new religious movement. On the contrary, in the intellectual conditions of Antiquity, the rational creation of 'the one god' was an action as atheistic as the negation of polytheism by any means. And as he liberated this god from any human additions, so he also liberated people from the chains of religion by an appeal to the reason in opposition to undemonstrated beliefs," R. Falus, 'La 'démonstration' de l'idée de dieu chez Xénophane', *Acta Antiqua Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 19 (1971), p. 253. It is worth remembering that Xenophanes wanted to liberate people from the chains of traditional religion, not from religion in general. He wanted to purify religion, not reject it. His arguments against "human additions" are not arguments "for the rejection of religion on the grounds that some ingredients of inherited religious narrative are morally objectionable and comtempible." He simply "criticized contemporary religious notions as not good enough," K.J. Dover, 'The freedom of the intellectual in Greek society', *Talanta* 7 (1975), pp. 48–49.

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Chapter 3

Heraclitus and the Logos

Quite often Heraclitus is seen as a philosopher of change and his philosophy is summarized in his famous phrase *panta rhei*. His philosophy is seen as an opposite pole from Parmenides, as a dynamic vs. static vision of reality. It is as though Heraclitus was the first to notice that there is change in nature and, therefore, elevated it to the cosmic principle. Plato says that according to Heraclitus, "the things that are, are all flowing and nothing stands fast" (*Cratylus* 401d). However, he adds immediately that Heraclitus is "spouting some ancient bits of wisdom that Homer also tells us" and this wisdom is retained in, among other things, the name of the goddess Rhea (402ab). Heraclitus did not discover anything new. The doctrine of cosmic change is "Homeric or still more ancient" (*Theaetetus* 179e). The observation about constant change did not require particular perspicacity; it is a commonsense observation that was obvious to the ancients as well, as testified by the etymology investigated by Plato. Heraclitus was interesting to Plato in this context not because of the originality and depth of his views, but because of the catchy phrases he used to summarize this view: "everything gives way and nothing stands still," "you cannot step into the same water twice" (*Cratylus* 402a = B91). In that respect, Heraclitus is merely a follower of Homer who "made all things the offspring of flux and motion"; Heraclitus, as many others, considered all things to be "in process of coming to be as the result of movement and change" (*Theaetetus* 152e).

For Heraclitus, however, it was clear that there exist two different but intertwined orders – an order of durability and an order of ephemeral existence; of immutability and of motion. For Heraclitus, unlike for Parmenides, both orders are real, but there is a clear hierarchy: the immutable order is primary; the order of reality in motion is only its manifestation. A true thinker should not stop at the level of the mutable reality; the thinker should reach the level of the immutable, the ultimate level of which determines the mechanism of the mutable reality. Therefore, *panta rhei* refers to one, mutable, and less, metaphysically, important aspect of reality. Like Parmenides, Heraclitus wanted to go beyond the veil of the obvious; he wanted to find the immutable that manifests itself in the form of constant change, the unity that lies at the foundation of the many.[1] This can be seen best in his teaching of the opposites.

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[1] To Hegel and Schleiermacher, *panta rhei* was the principal idea in Heraclitus' philosophy. However, to Hegel, the work of a philosopher lies in going beyond this change to find the invariable, which, to him, is the ubiquity of the triadic structure of change: thesis–antithesis–synthesis. Minar, after stating that "for Heraclitus it was the fact of change itself which was fundamental," says that "most important, the world as a whole presents itself to him as a kind of harmony," that is, something stable, invariable, Edwin L. Minar, 'The logos of Heraclitus', *Classical Philology* 34 (1939), pp. 340–341. After stating that in Heraclitus'

Opposites

The concept of opposites was a common theme in Greek philosophy. Heraclitus generously uses the opposites in the extant fragments;[2] however, he stressed their interrelatedness, the unity of opposites rather than their clash. Night is always followed by day and vice versa, they constitute a unity, a whole, νυχθήμερον.[3] It is difficult to establish a clear borderline between the two: day turns into night continuously and so does night into day. There are clearly differences between night and day but, still, they are parts of an overall unity, the day-and-night, from which they cannot be clearly extracted.[4]

The interplay of the opposites is symbolized by strife:[5] "all things happen in accordance with strife" (Origen, *Contra Celsum* 6.42 = B80). The perceptual reality is constantly in flux, we hardly observe any static elements in the world. The change is caused by the tension of the opposites, by their strife. One instance of strife is the war that is "father of all, and king of all; it renders some gods, others men; it makes some slaves, others free" (Hippolytus, *Ref.* 9.9.4 = B53).[6] War determines the fate of all people, it makes some heroes, brings freedom to some, and enslaves others. War is a particular instance of strife. Strife is a cosmic phenomenon, war is found among people. But, like strife, war is a subject of harmony, of an unseen law and thus of God (Hippolytus, *Ref.* 9.10.8 = B67). War is something common (B80), and because, in general, "all things happen in accordance with the strife" (B80), war is one way of actualizing social changes. However, there is a law behind them and war is subject to it.[7]

In Heraclitus' eyes, only the deluded multitude fail to see the unity of the opposites and think that opposites are separate entities and thus view the cosmos as a collection of disharmonious elements, as a disorganized collection of things. They, like Hesiod,

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system there is nothing outside motion, Jeanniére says that "Logos is the name of identity as a creative dynamism of harmony" and that Logos, the god, "is the dialectics itself of movement," that is, harmony and dialectics are the invariant elements, Abel Jeannière, *Héraclite* (Paris: Aubier Montaigne, 1977), pp. 17, 42, 46.

[2] What is counted as opposites may be sometimes disputable. Joel Wilcox, *The Origins of Epistemology in Early Greek Thought: a study of psyche and logos in Heraclitus* (Lewiston: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1994), pp. 32–33 note 23, lists nineteen pairs of opposites, Wolfgang H. Pleger, *Der* Logos *der Dinge: eine Studie zu Heraklit* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1987), pp. 42–43, lists twenty-four such pairs.

[3] The word is late, Charles Kahn, *The Art and Thought of Heraclitus*, Cambridge University Press, 1981, 109; Wilcox, *The Origins of Epistemology in Early Greek Thought*, p. 31. Interestingly, English, German, and French, for example, do not have an exact equivalent of this word. But cf. Polish equivalent *doba* or Russian сутки.

[4] "Two opposites form a continuum within every given thing," Miroslav Marcovich, 'Heraclitus: some characteristics', *Illinois Classical Studies* 7 (1982), p. 174.

[5] "War or strife probably symbolizes the interaction between opposites," Jackson Hershell, 'The idea of strife in early Greek thought', *Personalist* 55 (1974), p. 209.

[6] The fragment makes sense only when πάντων is a genitive of masculine πάντες (all [gods and people]) and not of neuter πάντα (all [things]), Klaus Held, *Heraklit, Parmenides und der Anfang von Philosophie und Wissenschaft* (Berlin: de Gruynter, 1980), p. 450.

[7] Therefore, it is difficult to agree with the view that the Logos and war are the same, as stated by Pleger, *Der* Logos *der Dinge*, p. 43.

"do not understand how [the sum of all things] being at variance, agrees with itself" (Hippolytus, *Ref.* 9.9.1 = B51). But if someone, like Heraclitus, can see things clearly, then he knows that the perceived differences and the underlying unity are the two sides of the same reality. Opposites do not follow unity; unity is not an effect of uniting the opposites. Both exist at the same time. Through the constant flow of reality, through the transitions from one opposite to another, transpire regularity, harmony, and unity. The unity is hidden, and yet more important than the opposites. The opposites by themselves would lead to disorder. Order is accomplished through the opposites, through their harmonization[8] – the "invisible harmony is more excellent than the visible one" (Hippolytus, *Ref.* 9.9.5 = B54). It is not hard to notice harmony if it presents itself to the naked eye, but it is more difficult, and more important to find it behind things apparently disharmonious. Opposites may be far from suggesting that there is an order in the flow of events; however, to the few who venture to see beyond the appearance, there is a harmony behind opposites. The flow of the opposites is not accidental; there is hidden harmony which determines the order of events in nature and society. Heraclitus explicitly says that "nature loves to hide itself" (Themistius, *Or.* 5 69b = B123). The same principle can be applied to life in society; after all, "human laws are nourished by one divine [law]" (Stobaeus 3.1.179 = B114).

The world is cosmos; it is ordered and one reason for its orderliness is its substrate, fire. Another reason is that this fire is "kindling in measures and extinguishing in measures" (Clement, *Strom.* 5.104.2–3 = B30); that is, changes that are ongoing in the world are orderly, organized.[9] This is what makes the world cosmos: unity through substrate and unity through the law of the changes of cosmic phenomena. These phenomena by themselves are insufficient to constitute the cosmos, they are just τὰ πάντα. "Cosmos is something different than *ta panta*, something different than the ensemble of things in their brute reality."[10] *Ta panta* are a unity, "all things are one" (Hippolytus, *Ref.* 9.9.1 = B50), because they are an organized collection of things and phenomena. This organization determines their unity. And this order stems from the Logos that is also the only one through which it can be recognized. The Logos thus has both ontological and epistemological priority.

Fire

Heraclitus states that "cosmos, the same for all, no one of gods or men has made, but it always was and is and shall be: an everliving fire (πῦρ ἀείζωον), kindling in measures and extinguishing in measures" (B30). The world is an ordered world, a cosmos. It is

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[8] It is not true that unity and strife are the same as claimed by Pleger, *Der* Logos *der Dinge*, p. 34; there is only coincidence of the two, unity is the unity of the opposites; strife is not a malevolent factor thanks to its submission to the law of unity.

[9] In B30, "Heraclitus affirms the eternal life of world-order, in spite of war, injustice, and destructions which gods and men carry out," Conrado Eggers Lan, 'Ethical-religious meaning of fr. 30 D.-K.', in L. Rossetti (ed.), *Atti del Symposium Heracliteum* (Roma: Ateneo, 1983), vol. 1, p. 295.

[10] Jean-Pierre Bernard, *L'Univers d'Héraclite* (Paris: Belin, 1998), p. 175; similarly, Pleger, *Der* Logos *der Dinge*, pp. 48, 50.

seen as a multitude of things and events, and yet it is ordered. One reason is that the world is fire, it is manifestation of fire, and it is composed of fire that is its substrate. It is suggested that fire can be at the same time "a material constituent of the universe," its *arche* – and that much was already clear for Aristotle (*Met.* 984a7 = A5), "the prime material constituent of the universe," and "the directive force."[11] However, it seems that only the first two functions can be retained, the third belonging to the Logos. Fire is a substrate that has a similar status to that of Anaximander's *Apeiron* and Anaximenes' air. Aetius says that according to Heraclitus, "fire is the principle of all things. It is from fire that all things originate … and in fire they perish" (1.3.11 = A5). The transformations of fire into other elements of the universe take place in measures, in orderly and proportional fashion. Here are "fire's turnings (τροπαί): first, sea, and of sea half [becomes] earth and half burner (lightning?)" (Clement. *Strom.* 5.104.3–4 = B31). It is suggested that *trope* is a pun on *tropos*, which means turning and also manner; therefore, it is possible that turnings of fire from fr. B31 are also its "modes of existence."[12] Water and earth are thus modes of fire's existence.

A metaphysically momentous view of fire is also expressed in the statement that "Fire is exchanged for all things and all things for fire, as goods for gold and gold for goods" (Plutarch, *De E* 388e = B90). Diogenes Laertius comments on the view that "all things are an exchange for fire, coming into being by rarefaction and condensation" with the caustic but not inapt remark that Heraclitus' "exposition of this matter is not at all clear" (9.8 = A1). Furthermore, Theophrastus seems to treat the statement that "all things are an exchange for fire" as a summary of the view that "existent things are out of fire," the first principle, and turn "back down again into fire" (Simplicius, *In Phys.* 24.1–3 = A5) which is the same view as expressed by Plutarch before he quotes fr. B90 (*De E* 388d). Fire is thus a matrix of all things; they are derived from fire and turn back to fire. What we observe in the universe is the result of the changes of fire.

Wilcox asks whether Heraclitus was a pyromonist or pyrodualist. He was a pyromonist in the sense of recognizing only one principle, namely fire. But this everliving fire-*arche* manifests itself in variety of guises, including the perceptible, everyday fire, and in this sense Heraclitus can be considered a pyrodualist. Fire-*arche* has different modes of existence, different manifestations. Few things differ so much as fire and water, but, for Heraclitus, water is really fire; it is a different form of fire and so is earth and phenomenal, everyday fire.[13] Phenomenal fire and water are different, but, ontologically, they are the same because they are derived from the same substrate. Today we could say that water and fire are results of different configurations of electrons, protons, and neutrons, and that from the sub-atomic

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[11] T.M. Robinson, Commentaries, in Heraclitus, *Fragments* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987), p. 97.

[12] Wilcox, *The Origins of Epistemology in Early Greek Thought*, p. 42.

[13] The difference between two kinds of fire becomes pronounced in the Stoic doctrine of πῦρ τεχνικόν and πῦρ ἄτεχνον; but earlier Plato mentions various sorts of fire (*Tim*. 58c), Aristotle distinguishes terrestrial fire from aether which is called a heavenly fire (*Meteor*. 340a19; *De gen. et corr*. 330b25,29) and also Theophrastus discusses two kinds of fire (*De igne* 4); see Michael Lapidge, 'ἀρχαί and στοιχεῖα: a problem in Stoic cosmology', *Phronesis* 18 (1973), pp. 268–272.

perspective the difference between phenomenal fire and water is insignificant. The difference becomes more pronounced on the perceptual level.

There is also one more difference between everliving fire and phenomenal fire although the difference is not known directly from Heraclitus. After quoting fr. B64, Hippolytus says that according to Heraclitus, "fire is intelligent (φρόνιμον … τὸ πῦρ) and the cause of management of the whole [universe]" (Hippolytus, *Ref.* 9.10.7 = B64). The view may be considered as an incorrect representation of Heraclitus' view because of its anthropomorphism. However, as Held indicates it, for Heraclitus there is no demarcation line between what belongs to the human realm and to the realm of objective nature.[14] This is true because fire is the principle of the entire universe. So it may be assumed that Heraclitus did assign intelligence to fire.[15] This fact is manifested in humans in their having souls.

Soul

Fire is endowed with rationality, which has the fullest expression in the existence of the soul (ψυχῆ). The soul was always associated with life. It was a principle of life, the breath of life in humans, and death meant that the soul leaves the body and goes to Hades. Fire is called ever-living, and thus by being constituted by fire and infusing the soul with the life-attribute of fire, the soul can become a life-force in humans.

Aristotle says that, for Heraclitus, soul is "exhalation of which everything else is composed" (*De anima* 405a25–26 = A15). Aristotle assumes that there are two kinds of exhalation, moist and dry, thus the exhalation ascribed to Heraclitus must be dry. And because to Aristotle fire is the *arche* in Heraclitus' doctrine, the dry exhalation "of which everything else is composed" must be fire. Soul is thus not air, as for Anaximenes (Aetius 1.3.4 = 13B2), but fire, at least in its most rectified state: "dry soul is wisest and best" (Stobaeus 3.5.8 = B118).[16] Any admixture of moisture impedes the soul, so that, for example, a drunk man "not knowing where he goes, having his soul moist," must be led by a boy (Stobaeus 3.5.7 = B117). In this, Heraclitus gives a new status to the soul. *Psyche* is no longer only a life-force and the center of personality. For the first time, Heraclitus links *psyche* with rationality: drunkenness causes dampness of the *psyche*, and therefore man does not *know* where he is going. The soul is thus a rational principle and its rational faculties are debilitated by moisture.

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[14] Held, *Heraklit*, p. 414.

[15] "Fire is somehow endowed with intelligence," agrees Philip Wheelwright, *Heraclitus* (New York: Atheneum, 1964), p. 40; Kirk allows for a possibility that Heraclitus "assigned reason to fire," at least "to some" fire, G.S. Kirk, *Heraclitus: the cosmic fragments* (Cambridge: University Press, 1970), p. 354.

[16] "The soul in its true and effective state is made of fire," G.S. Kirk, J.E. Raven, and M. Schofield, *The Presocratic Philosophers* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 204; "the soul … becomes … a formation of fire," Kostas Axelos, *Héraclite et la philosophie* (Paris: Minuit, 1962), p. 180; see also Held, *Heraklit*, p. 430; Wilcox, *The Origins of Epistemology in Early Greek Thought*, pp. 79, 81, 86.

The soul can turn completely into its opposite, moisture: "for souls it is death to become water" (Clement, *Strom.* 6.17.2 = B36). The soul is part of the always changeable universe and ceases to exist as a soul when, in its turnings, fire is transformed into water (cf. B31). In this light, immortality of the soul becomes uncertain in Heraclitus' system,[17] but this does not mean that the soul dies when the body dies. Because Heraclitus mentions souls living in Hades (Plutarch, *Fac. lun.* 943e = B98), souls may die long after parting with the body.

Also, not unexpectedly, in the system in which opposites are really a manifestation of an underlying union, the contrast between life and death is not that sharp. Heraclitus says that "immortals [are/become] mortals, mortals immortals, living death of those, having died (dead) [in/as to] life of those" (Hippolytus, *Ref.* 9.10.6 = B62). It seems that the phrase "immortals mortals" should be connected with "living death of those" and "mortals immortals" with "having died to life of those,"[18] rather than vice versa.[19] The fragment can be explained by Heraclitus' belief in reincarnation.[20] Immortal souls become, in a sense, mortal when joined with mortal bodies and they live the death of these mortal bodies; that is, because human life always meets with death, human life is life unto death, human life is death. Before quoting fr. B21, Clement of Alexandria rhetorically asks, "Does not Heraclitus … call birth death?" (*Strom.* 3.21.1). To him, "descending to a body is for the soul a dream and death" (5.105.2). And yet through the souls, immortal elements of human life, humans are immortal; they become immortal during or in the life of immortal souls after they are dead.

Logos

The *panta rhei* doctrine points to something stable, invariable, which is intelligent, everliving fire. But Heraclitus does not end here. He writes about the Logos which is to him so important that he opens his book with grand statements concerning the Logos (in B1 and B2): "But of Logos that always exists, people are uncomprehending … for although all things happen according to the Logos, they are like people with no experience when they experience words and deeds such as I expound distinguishing each thing according to its nature and pointing to how it is" (SE 7.132 = B1). "That is why one must follow what is common; but although the Logos is common, many live as though they had their own understanding" (SE 7.133 = B2). There are several attributes mentioned in these two fragments. The Logos is eternal; it is a pattern or law, or a directing force according to which things happen; it is common (ξῠνός = κοινός), that is, general, universal; and it is comprehended by only a few, such as Heraclitus.

Some of these characteristics point to the divine status of the Logos. The Logos is eternal and this was a primary attribute of the immortals, the gods. Everything

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[17] That souls are mortal, is assumed by Kirk et al., *The Presocratic Philosophers*, p. 208; Axelos, *Héraclite et la philosophie*, p. 196.

[18] Held, *Heraklit*, p. 452.

[19] As conjectured by Jean Bollack and Heinz Wismann, *Héraclite ou la séparation* (Paris: Minuit, 1972), p. 209.

[20] His belief in reincarnation can be detected in B26 and B63, see also Robinson, Commentaries, pp. 94, 126.

happens according to the Logos and this by itself suffices as the statement that the Logos is eternal: if it were not, then not everything would happen according to the Logos, and it is obvious to Heraclitus that the world is uncreated (B30). So everything from eternity happens according to the equally eternal Logos. Whether it means that the Logos is something akin to the law of necessity,[21] blind fate, *moira*, or to an intelligent agent is nowhere stated explicitly. Fr. B114 may point to the latter. In fr. B114, "the common" is equated with the divine law and, according to fr. B2, the Logos is also common. This points to the identification of the Logos with the divine law, a pattern of human laws of fr. B114. But everliving fire is also both eternal and common. It is common in the sense that everything is its manifestation, that it is the *arche* of the world. This points to a strong link between the Logos and the everliving fire. Are they the same? There is such a possibility, but it appears more likely that the Logos is just one side of the everliving fire: the fire is intelligent and this intelligence is the fire's Logos, and thereby the Logos is the intellectual side of reality.[22] The Logos is the universal Reason, as later stated explicitly by the Stoics.

Technically, the everliving fire was called *phronimon*. What is the relation between *logos* and *phronesis*? Although *phrenes* was viewed as a locus of emotion and will, the gods of the epic poets also performed intellectual activities with the *phrenes*.[23] There is no contradiction between this statement and fr. B2, which says that "although the Logos is common, many live as though they had their own understanding (φρόνησις)" because, as aptly observed by Held, fr. B2 does not set the Logos against *phronesis*, but "common" against "their own" which renders oxymoronic the phrase, "their own understanding": "*phronesis* by necessity is always connected with the common."[24] There is a possibility that the everliving fire's *phronesis* and the Logos can be simply identified.[25] However, if we agree with the statement that "*phronesis* is knowledge related to action,"[26] then the Logos can be considered the rationality of the *pyr phronimon*. This rationality encompasses *phronesis*, theoretical reasoning, and memory. Also, with *phronesis* understood as "knowledge related to action," there is little problem in recognizing the active role of the Logos in guiding the universe.[27]

In fr. B113 Heraclitus states that "thinking (τὸ φρονέειν) is common to all." Because the Logos is common (B2), and because the Logos is the intellectual side of the everliving fire, the principle of the universe, the Logos, is common not only to all

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[21] The Logos is blindly logical and necessary, "the first prisoner of necessity," Pierre Bise, *La Politique d'Héraclite d'Éphèse* (Paris: Alcan, 1925), p. 146.

[22] Fire is the vehicle of the Logos, as phrased by Abel Jeanniére, *La Pensée d'Héraclite d'Éphèse et la vision présocratique du monde* (Paris: Aubier, 1959), p. 78.

[23] *Th.* 488, *Il.* 2.3, 8.366,446, 14.264, 15.163, 16.435, 20.115–116, *Od.* 3.132.

[24] Held, *Heraklit*, p. 134.

[25] "The *koinos logos* … is itself *phronesis*," James Adam, 'The doctrine of the Logos in Heraclitus', in his *The Vitality of Platonism and Other Essays* (Cambridge: University Press, 1911), p. 85; the Logos is a real identity of intelligibility and intelligence of fire according to Robert Lahaye, *La Philosophie ionienne* (Paris: Les Éditions du Cèdre, 1966), p. 111.

[26] Werner Jaeger, *Paideia* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1946), vol. 1, p. 460 notes 158 and 161.

[27] This confirms the authenticity of the corresponding idea expressed in fr. 72: the "Logos guides the whole," but the remark is frequently assumed to be Marcus Aurelius' own interjection.

people (weak interpretation of "all"), but also to all things (strong interpretation).[28] Rationality is present – directly or indirectly – in all things because all things are derived from intelligent fire, *pyr phronimon*. This does not mean that all objects in the universe are intelligent and thinking, but that they are derived from intelligent substrate, they are results of intelligent design, the guiding activity of the Logos, the fire's rational side, and as such they embody thinking.

How do people know about the Logos? As Socrates did later, Heraclitus goes by the Delphic maxim, "know yourself," by stating, "I investigated myself" (B101 and Plutach's remark after quoting it in *Adv. Col.* 1118c). The Logos is a cosmic entity, but it can be first and best discovered in man's soul. Each man should open himself to the Logos, whose immeasurable measure is locked within himself. Humans are not the same in that respect and some have more Logos than others. So wise men are the ones who possess it in the maximum degree, such as one of the seven sages of Antiquity, "Bias, son of Teutames, whose Logos is greater than that of the others" (DL 1.88 = B39).[29] The Logos that manifests itself in the soul is beyond limits: "One would never discover the limits of soul should one traverse every road; so deep Logos it possesses" (DL 9.7 = B45).[30] The role of the wise men, those who posses deeper insight, who align themselves with the voice of the Logos, is to direct others to the Logos. Heraclitus sees himself as playing this role. He wants people to turn to the Logos; he is the herald of the cosmic Logos, but the way leads through the Logos which can be discovered within: "Not after listening to me but to the Logos one does wisely in agreeing that everything is one" (Hippolytus, *Ref.* 9.9.1 = B50). Man is a place in which the Logos reveals itself. "Consequently, it is only by entering into (*approfindissement*) himself that man can enter into contact with this enigmatic *logos* – divine, fire, *physis* – which loves to hide itself (fr. 123)."[31] This road to the limits of the soul can be difficult, maybe impossible. People "separate themselves [they are separated] from that with which they are intimately connected, from Logos that guides the whole" (Marcus Aurelius 4.46 = B72). People are thus rooted in the Logos, and they have to be made aware of this fact so that they consciously assent

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[28] Robinson, Commentaries, p. 155; accepting the stronger version does not necessarily imply "something like panpsychism," as suggested by Kahn, *The Art and Thought of Heraclitus*, p. 119, but see Empedocles 31B110,10.

[29] "Heraclitus means simply that Bias had more of the Logos – the universal and eternal Logos – in him than other teachers," Adam, 'The doctrine of the Logos in Heraclitus', p. 86. When "*logos*" is translated by "esteem" or "fame," fr. B39 amounts to a trite statement, which is possible; but it seems that at least a wordplay was intended here by Heraclitus that points not only to the fact of Bias' fame but to its source, the Logos. The possibility of a wordplay is recognized by Kahn, *The Art and Thought of Heraclitus*, p. 176.

[30] In a disputed fragment – ascribed to Socrates by Stobaeus – Heraclitus states that "soul has *logos* that increases itself" (B115). If the fragment is genuine, then it can be interpreted as stating that, true, the Logos is beyond limits, but beyond human or humanly comprehensible limits; from the divine perspective of the Logos, its measure allotted to each man increases.

[31] Lambros Couloubaritis, 'Prolégomènes à l'anthropologie de Héraclite', in Rossetti, *Atti del Symposium Heracliteum*, p. 121; Heraclitus "seeks to discover the world-soul from the human soul, and metaphysics from physics" Hermann Diels, *Herakleitos von Ephesos* (Berlin, 1909), p. x.

to the Logos, which at least will give them an understanding of the harmony that is hidden behind the vicissitudes of everyday life and the changes that permeate the universe. In this, Heraclitus gives a new status to the soul. The rationality of the soul is an individual reflection of the rationality of the cosmos; the rationality of its constitutive principle, the everliving fire; the rationality of the intelligent side of the fire, the Logos. This Logos can be found in the soul and in this way, the soul becomes an inherent part of cosmos, not only of its physical side but primarily of its rational side. The soul is rational because it is a microcosm and because it embodies the Logos, and man's role is to discover it, to be consciously guided by it.

There still remains the problem of the ontological status of the Logos. Considering the fact that "being forever" is a phrase Homer uses customarily for the description of the gods indicates that a statement that the Logos "holds forever" (ἐόντος αἰει) points to its divine character.[32] This hardly squares with giving the Logos merely the status of a description of the world. Also, the Logos can be heard before and after Heraclitus says anything on its behalf. He points to the Logos as the source of wisdom. The Logos is thus not merely an account, but an author of an account, or rather, of the account. The divine character of the Logos leads us to the problem of the divine in Heraclitus' doctrine.

God

In fr. B67, which is the closest to the specification of what God is, Heraclitus states: "God – day night, winter summer, war peace, satiety hunger – undergoes change just like [fire?, wine?, oil?] mingled with spices gets named according to the scent of each them." If spice is added to a meal to add flavor, the nature of the meal thereby does not change. The role of the spice is to change taste and smell, amplify natural taste of the meal and change its savor. And this is its role with any substrate with which the spice is mixed. The fragment does not state to what spices are added, and commentators made many guesses.[33] However, it does not really matter what it is because the meaning of the simile remains the same. If spice is burned in a fire, the fire is enriched by acquiring savor of the spice, but fire remains fire. Manifestation of fire changes, it looks and certainly smells differently with spices than without them, but fire is still fire. Fire as a substrate does not change. And so God does not change either, God who manifests himself to the human eye under the guise of contradictory appearances such as night and day, but just as night and day are inextricably intertwined in a unity of the night-and-day, and winter and summer in the unity of a year, so are these unities manifestations of the underlying order and harmony that is called God. God in his essence does not change, his manifestations

[32] Because of the use of this traditional phrase in respect to the Logos, it is hard to agree that the phrase indicates that the Logos is "something inanimate" as opposed to the everliving fire that should be something animate, Wilcox, *The Origins of Epistemology in Early Greek Thought*, p. 71. In this way, the traditional gods would also be pronounced inanimate because they are merely "being forever."

[33] Some assume that there is no missing word at all and the subject of the second clause of fr. 67 is nameless, Kahn, *The Art and Thought of Heraclitus*, p. 280.

do.[34] From our limited, human perspective we perceive the world as a sequence of phenomena belonging to the opposite categories: day follows night, satiety follows hunger. But if we could apply real perspective, if we abided by the voice of the Logos, then we would see the underlying unity which can be found in God. We cannot see this unity directly; it is something inferred from the multitude of the time-bound perceptions which, by themselves, suggest anything but unity. Human observers can see the unity if they realize that there is something hidden behind the opposites, and if they see that these opposites are the signs of God, who "as such, is context free, unchanging and unchangeable."[35]

Another explicit statement about God pronounces, somewhat paradoxically, that "to the God all things are fair and just, although men have supposed some things unjust and some just" (Porphyry, *Ad Iliadem* 4.4 = B102).[36] How can this fragment be interpreted?

There are written and unwritten laws that cannot be overstepped. So as the written laws stem from one divine source (Stobaeus 3.1.179 = B114), so do moral laws. Those who violate the laws are punished, if not by civic authorities, then by the Olympian powers. The daughter of Zeus, "Dike will catch up with fabricators of lies and false witnesses" (Clement, *Strom.* 5.9.3 = B28). But how can people know what is just and what is not? The law proscribes certain conduct and metes out punishment to those who overstep its boundaries. But is the law the only source of knowledge with regard to what is permitted and what is prohibited? Not really, seems to say Heraclitus. People, he states, "would not know the name of Dike if it were not for these things" (Clement, *Strom.* 4.10.1 = B23), where "these things" are possibly the laws, but, more likely, unjust things or deeds.[37] The latter conjecture is more likely because of the prevalence of opposites in Heraclitus' cosmos. Opposites are ubiquitous and certainly they are present in moral life and moral decisions.[38] However, people would not be aware of justice, of the moral side of life, if it were not for unjust acts. Lack of justice has thus a positive aspect, namely it makes people aware of justice;[39] the existence of injustice brings justice to the fore. But justice is order in the moral sphere; it is harmony seen from the ethical perspective and as such, justice underlies what is seen as just and unjust, but to God, who is (the source of) this harmony, everything is just, because to God there is ethical harmony even in the events that seemingly lack it.

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[34] According to Kirk, fr. 67 conveys the idea that "god is the neglected but all-important substratum … of all differentiation in the world," and thus "god has no separate existence outside the phenomenal world," which is just an expression of pantheism, Kirk, *Heraclitus*, 197, 201.

[35] Robinson, Commentaries, p. 128; "the essence of God remains unchanged in spite of the variety of the opposites in which he is entangled," Georgios Fatouros, 'Heraklits Gott', *Eranos* 92 (1994), p. 66.

[36] Cf. "for the gods there is only good, there is no evil" (Plotinus 1.7.3).

[37] Kirk, *Heraclitus*, pp. 126–127, 129.

[38] Fr. 23 presents the connection of opposites in "the commonly accepted structure of moral life," Kirk, *Heraclitus*, p. 129.

[39] This is similar to the medical principle of allopathy well attested in the Hippocratic corpus. Interestingly, the principle is considered very important in the context of Christian theology by Jürgen Moltmann, *The Crucified God* (New York: HarperCollins, 1991), p. 27.

Justice thus is seen through the existence of injustice. Justice manifests itself through constant tension between what is just and unjust, and, in this sense, "justice is strife" because "all things come to be through strife" (Origen, *Contra Celsum* 6.42 = B80), through the clash – or the succession – of the opposites. The harmony that results from the conflicts between the opposites is justice. Because justice is not limited to the moral sphere alone, it encompasses the entire universe.[40] In particular, "Sun will not defy his measures, otherwise the Erinyes, heralds of Dike, will find him out."[41] So as punishing the murderer is a matter of justice – and of Erinyes as servants of Dike – so is the regularity of motions of heavenly bodies included in the category of the law. Natural phenomena are seen here not as mere empirical unchangeability, but as restraints of a measure. Dike governs not only among men, but she is also a norm of cosmos and punishes crossing the boundary as *hybris*.[42] Moral order in society and natural order in the universe are the two sides of the same universal justice. Dike in fr. B94 "serves as an embodiment of the inviolable order of nature"[43] or rather, order of the whole reality, social and natural, because Dike watches the course of motion of heavenly bodies just as much as she watches that people do not lie. There is one justice in natural and societal manifestations, because there is one universal, divine law, and only from the divine perspective is everything just because only God sees the course of natural and human events in their cosmic context. From this all-encompassing perspective it can be pronounced that everything is just because the universe is ordered and all events *in toto*, diachronically and synchronically, amount to enhancement of this universal harmony. To God, everything would not be fair and just if the universe eventually ceased to be the cosmos, if order in it collapsed. However, the role of Dike is not to allow that to happen. The order not only prevails in spite of events seemingly disrupting it, but thanks to such events. Justice is strife, justice is through the opposites, and the harmony is through strife and only God sees it fully.

God is the most likely subject of some other fragments, in particular B32 and B108. In fr. B32 we read that "One, the only wise (ἕν τὸ σοφόν), is unwilling and is willing (ἐθέλει) to be called Zeus." In this fragment, One (in neuter) is an embodiment of wisdom that can be identified with God. One possesses will, so it possesses mind and – having all wisdom – intelligence. One is not just "one thing," it is an entity that surpasses gender denominations. In this, Heraclitus follows Xenophanes' anti-

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[40] The meaning of Dike must be "the right way," "the proper course of events," Kirk, *Heraclitus*, p. 128.

[41] Plutarch, *De exil.* 604a = B94; cf. the Derveni Papyrus, col. iv and David Sider, 'Heraclitus and the Derveni Papyrus', in A. Laks and G.W. Most (eds), *Studies in the Derveni Papyrus* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), pp. 131, 143–144.

[42] Kurt Latte, 'Der Rechtsgedanke im archaischen Griechentum', *Antike und Abendland* 2 (1946), p. 70 (reprinted in his *Kleine Schriften* [Munich: Beck, 1968]); Dike is "the regularity of cosmic movements" and "the necessity of the permanence in the proportions," Pierre Guérin, *L'Idée de justice dans la conception de l'univers chez les premiers philosophes grecs* (Paris: Alcan, 1934), pp. 88, 89; "Dike signifies the order of the law; but for Heraclitus – also the order of nature," Ernest Cassirer, *Logos, Dike, Kosmos in der Entwicklung der griechischen Philosophie* (Göteborg: Wettergren & Kerberg, 1941), pp. 10, 20–21.

[43] Werner Jaeger, *The Theology of the Early Greek Philosophers* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1947), pp. 116.

anthropomorphism and this may explain why One is unwilling to be called Zeus, who was traditionally visualized very much in human form. But, on the other hand, Zeus, the father of the gods and men, the most powerful deity that rules over gods and men, is the supreme Olympian god and thus to the maximum degree encompasses divine attributes that belong to One. Thus One is willing to be called Zeus if only to use the name as an indication of where the universal divinity can be found. Heraclitus uses here the genitive Ζηνός instead of Διός. Although it is indicated that both forms are common in early Greek literature,[44] it seems that Heraclitus uses the first form here deliberately because he uses the second form in fr. B120. The first form points to a linguistic connection of the name of Zeus with the infinitive "to live," ζῆν. One is already assumed to be the seat of all wisdom and endowed with mind, and thus One is also a living being. By pointing to life as a denomination by which One wants to be called, Heraclitus may want to indicate that One is life *par excellence*, life itself. "When any name at all befits the only wise, then this is simply the name of life: Zeus as the unlimited living being."[45]

Fittingly, One, the only wise, is also pronounced to know "the plan that steers (κυβερνῆσαι) all things through all things" (DL 9.1 = B41). The plan (γνώμη) is a faint adumbration of the Platonic world of ideas that is used in the *Timaeus* by the Demiurge as models to shape the world. The plan is used to direct the course of events in the universe, to bring the opposites into a harmonious unity. And knowing such a plan is a divine prerogative: "human nature (ἦθος) does not have insight (γνώμας), divine, however, does" (Origen, *Contra Celsum* 6.12 = B78). True insight, true plan and knowledge, is the divine privilege, not human. What characterizes humans, what is part of human nature, is the lack of ultimate knowledge. Humans have to be open to the divine, to the voice of the Logos, spoken directly or indirectly, to see the plan, the harmony that saturates the universe. Left to their own devices, humans cut themselves off from this knowledge.

The idea of a divinity that steers the universe in accordance with its knowledge is not new. Earlier Anaximander maintained that the divine *Apeiron* steers all things (*Physics* 203b11–14 = 12A15) and a goddess also steers all things in Parmenides' astronomical system (28A37). Also, Homeric Zeus rules over gods and men and influences events, even from afar, through his insight. Because a thunderbolt was a traditional symbol of Zeus' power, the statement that a "thunderbolt governs (οἰακίζει) all things" (Hippolytus, *Ref.* 9.10.7 = B64) is a more mundane reiteration of the pronouncement about the One that steers all things.[46]

The only wise is also mentioned in fr. B108 where Heraclitus says: "Of all *logoi* I heard none gets to the point of recognizing that which is wise, separated from all." Is the wise a transcendent entity,[47] outside the realm of the cosmos? If the only wise is identified with the Logos, and the latter is the intellectual side of the everliving

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[44] Robinson, Commentaries, p. 102.

[45] Held, *Heraklit*, p. 466.

[46] That "god is the motivator of all things" is "the simplest account of the meaning" of fr. 64, according to Kirk, *Heraclitus*, p. 355, who ascribes the interpretation to Gigon.

[47] As conjectured by Ernst Neustadt, 'Der Zeushymnos des Kleanthes', *Hermes* 66 (1931), p. 400.

fire, then the wise is not altogether separated from all. Separation rather means separation from change, separation from everything mutable. The only wise is itself immutable, it steers all things, steers the changes in cosmos, in all things, itself being not subjected to any change. The logic of change is changeless. In this, One, the only wise, the Logos, is God.

Religious rites

In the light of the preceding discussion it is interesting to consider the fragments in which Heraclitus refers to traditional religion.

Concerning the purification rites, Heraclitus says that people "vainly purify themselves when they are defiled with blood just as someone who stepped into mud would wash himself with mud;[48] he would be considered mad if any man noticed him do so. And they pray to the statues, like someone who would talk to houses, not knowing who gods and heroes are" (B5). Purification does not appear to be ruled out altogether, only some purification is. Mud is a mixture of water and earth, so using these two elements in purification rites is not effective. However, because of the fundamental role of fire in Heraclitus' doctrine, it can be surmised that using fire in such rites could be proper. Clement mentions that Heraclitus "knew about purification with fire" (*Strom.* 5.9.4). How exactly purification with fire can be accomplished is not clear. But there is little doubt that fire has also religious significance because he says that fire, "having come upon all things, will judge and convict them" (B66).

Fr. B5 includes a criticism of prayers to the statues. But already Celsus noticed approvingly that Heraclitus does not criticize those who pray to statues, but those who do not know the gods and the heroes (Celsus is criticized by Origen for agreeing with Heraclitus on that point in *Contra Celsum* 7.62, 65). Praying to the statues should thus be really a prayer to the gods. Statues are only a medium through which people's attention should be directed towards the gods during their prayers, not the destination of the prayers.[49]

In another fragment, Heraclitus directs his attention to Dionysiac festivals: "If it were not in honor of Dionysus that their processions are done and hymns sung to shameful parts, they would be most shameless; but Hades and Dionysus, for whom they rave and celebrate Lenaia, are the same" (B15). It is not quite clear why Hades appears in the second part of the fragment. The reference to him here seems to be quite abrupt, unless Hades is mentioned earlier by Heraclitus in a part of fr. 15 not quoted by Clement. Perhaps the name of Hades (Ἀίδης) is invoked here as a pun on "shameful parts" (αἰδοίοισιν) and particularly on "most shameless" (ἀναιδέστατα). And except for

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[48] Interpreters are frequently tempted to introduce a symmetry between "mud/with mud" and "blood/with blood" by adding the second occurrence of 'blood' or correcting, like Diels-Krantz, ἄλλως to ἄλλῳ, new [blood], which is not necessary, see Bollack, Wismann, *Héraclite ou la séparation*, p. 72.

[49] The practice of such prayers is justified when the person praying realizes that "a 'universal,' ubiquitous god is 'represented,' for cultic purposes, by this or that statue," Mantas Adomenas, 'Heraclitus on religion', *Phronesis* 44 (1999), p. 106.

these puns, there may seem to be little connection between the two parts of fr. B15. But in the context of Heraclitus' religious views, this connection can be made stronger.

The processions and hymns of Dionysiac festivals are by themselves most obscene. The orgiastic celebrations that characterize them are meaningful and acceptable only within the religious context of these festivals.[50] They must not be goal in themselves but should serve the purpose of directing the participants toward the deity in whose honor the festival is held. The deity, however, is not just the Dionysus of the traditional mythology, but the deity that is the union of two, at first blush, contradictory deities – one of death, one of wine and virility and fertility, and thus of life. They are, however, one and the same because, in reality, there is only one deity, one God and other gods are his manifestations. There is one God who is a god of life and death, but this God is understood by traditional Greek religion as a multiplicity of gods, each of them focused upon some area of the whole. If peoples' attention can be directed toward this unity of the gods, then the otherwise shameful celebrations serve their purpose.[51]

This interpretation helps in finding the meaning of fr. B14. In this fragment, Heraclitus says that "what are regarded as mysteries among men are performed in an unholy manner." The problem is that two translations are possible and, accordingly, two interpretations.[52] When translated "mysteries performed among men are unholy," fr. 14 implies a wholesale rejection of mysteries. When translated "mysteries are performed among men in an unholy manner," fr. B14 states that mysteries can be of some value if celebrated properly (Kirk), or, that holiness of the mysteries justifies the use of unholy means (Robinson, Adomenas). But even the first interpretation may be softened. The rites of the Dionysiac festivals are by themselves obscene, and acquire religious significance in proper context, that is, not only in the festivals, but in the festivals that are in honor of Dionysus who is the same as Hades. This amounts to proper disposition of the participants rather that to executing a sequence of rites. This disposition makes the rites meaningful, or, at least, not shameful. Similarly with the rites of mysteries. By themselves, these rites are not holy and so are not the mysteries as a collection or sequence of these rites. The disposition of the initiates, and other participants, endows these rites and, consequently, the mysteries, with their sacred character.[53] So, "mysteries performed among men are unholy," unless they direct the participants to the true reality, unless they bring the participants closer to the sacred.

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[50] Catherine Osborne, 'Heraclitus', in C.C.W. Taylor (ed.), *From the Beginning to Plato* (London: Routledge, 1997), pp. 90–95.

[51] "Dionisus and his cult are 'justified' only to the extent in which the god of the most orgiastic festivals joins his 'opposite,' the god of death," Axelos, *Héraclite et la philosophie*, p. 139; "such rituals can possess … a positive value, because they guide men indirectly to the apprehension of the Logos," Kirk et al., *The Presocratic Philosophers*, p. 209; Dionysiac rituals are acceptable because by celebrating them "people celebrate the identity of Dionysus and Hades, the identity of the opposites of life and death," Adomenas, 'Heraclitus on religion', p. 94.

[52] Daniel Babut, 'Héraclite et la religion populaire', *Revue des Études Anciennes* 77 (1975), p. 32.

[53] "There is nothing less Heraclitean than the idea that people can act properly without comprehending what they do or that the rites can guide them to apprehension of the *logos* when they are not conscious of it," ibid., 46.

It seems to be clear that Heraclitus is not condemning the traditional religion *in toto*. For him, traditional beliefs and rites have beneficial value as the way leading to the highest unity, the unity of the divine Logos, which is God. By themselves, these beliefs are without any value; the religious context and the attitude of the believers is what infuses them with positive value. Not everyone, as Heraclitus, can be conscious of the Logos. The Logos hides itself, but the way it does so is at the same time its manifestation, the way of revealing itself to people. The Olympian gods are not the ultimate religious reality but signs of this reality, avenues which lead to this reality, manifestations of this reality.[54] The essence of religion, however, lies in this ultimate reality of one God-Logos, and the effort of a philosopher should be directed to discern behind the appearance of phenomenal changes the immutable reality of the eternal Logos. This Logos is also accessible through religious practices, if only the practices are saturated with proper disposition. The soul includes a measure of divinity, of the Logos, and people should bring themselves through religious rites to the union with the cosmic Logos, which is the same that is in them. In religion, people should discover the divinity of the Logos that assures that cosmos is rational, ordered, and harmonious, and in philosophy they should discover the rationality of God because God and the Logos are the same.

In the light of this discussion, it is very difficult to agree that religious problems are unimportant for Heraclitus,[55] that he is an exponent of merely "literary theology."[56] It seems that Heraclitus' system can be understood properly from the theological perspective, that theology is its core and other components are only extensions of his main interest, which is theology.[57] Therefore, calling him a theologian of the Logos[58] can only be appropriate. Also, although Heraclitus' God is immanent in the world, he is not – as is often assumed – a proponent of pantheism. God-Logos is in full control of the events in the world, but identification of God with the world is inadmissible.[59]

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[54] The gods are "the clothing on the form of the one God," Olof Gigon, *Untersuchungen zu Heraklit* (Leipzig: Dieterich, 1935), p. 147; the only God "can meet the mortal, that is, a man who acquires knowledge in the various changing situations only as an actual god-form," Held, *Heraklit*, p. 462; Heraclitus marks a transition in Greek thought from religion to philosophy of religion in general because he expresses in a sensory manner his non-sensory ideas. Its essence are pure concepts presented in the form of the gods, Ferdinand Lassalle, *Die Philosophie Herakleitos des Dunklen von Ephesos*, in his *Gesammelte Reden und Schriften* (Berlin: Paul Cassirer, 1920), vol. 7, p. 357.

[55] Kirk, *Heraclitus*, p. 201; Osborne, 'Heraclitus', p. 90.

[56] Bernard, *L'Univers d'Héraclite*, p. 163.

[57] The contents of Heraclitus' work is an "elaborate and concrete system of speculative theology," Lassalle, *Die Philosophie Herakleitos des Dunklen von Ephesos*, p. 388.

[58] Pierre Somville, *Parménide d'Élée. Son temps et le nôtre* (Paris: Vrin, 1976), p. 16.

[59] See also Gigon, *Untersuchungen zu Heraklit*, pp. 469–473.

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Chapter 4

Parmenides and Being

Parmenides' system has always been an inexhaustible source of fascination because of the grandeur and, at the same time, paradoxical character of the ontological vision. Even after centuries of interpretations, there is little agreement on the meaning of the system and its particular components. However, there seems to be a common slant in these interpretations, at least in the last hundred years, starting with the groundbreaking publication of Hermann Diels on Parmenides' poem,[1] which de-emphasizes the religious and theological components of Parmenidean ontology and epistemology. These theological components are very often glossed over – sometimes they are barely mentioned, sometimes discounted as a mere metaphor (beginning with Diels), sometimes treated as mere embellishments.[2] One reason is that Parmenides nowhere calls Being, which he discusses in particular in fr. B8, God, and the Olympian personae he mentions are discounted as a bow toward traditional mythology with very little religious significance. It seems, however, that such an approach is unjustified, that the main concern of Parmenides in his poem is with theological issues, and that the poem is an attempt to show the way of truth, which is the way of acquiring true religious knowledge about God.

Truth and opinion

In a supernatural experience described in the proem, Parmenides ascends to the heavens riding on the road of a goddess in a chariot escorted by the Heliades, the daughters of Helios. The Heliades beguile Dike, who guards the gate to the heavens, so that Parmenides can pass through it and reach an unnamed goddess who reveals to him the way of truth, which is accessible to mortals on whom a special grace of the goddess is bestowed, and the way of opinion which is trodden by all mortals. How is it that mortals are confined to the way of opinion except on a rare occasion when someone, like Parmenides, is raised to the goddess to hear the truth? Why do mortals have no cognitive access to truth?

By our own strength, we cannot see Being directly, we cannot tread the way of truth. It is a special privilege granted by the goddess to only a few, such as Parmenides. We cannot see reality directly just as we cannot see our own face directly, but only

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[1] Hermann Diels, *Parmenides Lehrgedicht* (Berlin: Reimer, 1897).

[2] It is said, for instance, that "the fact that the goddess remains anonymous shows that she represents no religious figure at all … Parmenides could not have attributed any reality to the goddess because for him there exists only one thing, the unique and homogenous Being," Leonardo Tarán, *Parmenides* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1965), p. 31.

reflected in a mirror.[3] The mediation of the mirror introduces its own inadequacies. For instance, we see left and right sides reversed; we may see coloring or glistening caused by the mirror and think that this comes from reality reflected in it. Similarly with sensory perception, reality is filtered through ears, eyes, and other senses so that the mind receives a distorted picture of it. Even if the mind realizes that such a distortion takes place, it is unable to eliminate it because it would require having an unhindered access to reality to obtain its unpolluted image and compare it with the image produced by the senses. But our constitution as bodily beings renders such an access impossible. So, according to Theophrastus, Parmenides "regards perceiving and thinking as the same" (*De sensu* 3 = 28A46). Our thought is never pure, never completely detached from the senses. In our human world, we cannot acquire knowledge in any other way than by using both perception and thinking. To be on the way of truth we would have to rely on pure thinking. This is possible only through divine and seldom bestowed illumination that can actualize it. Normally, the reliance on perception to think renders it impossible to have an insight into the way of truth. Our humanity, left to itself, keeps us shackled to the way of opinion. It takes a ride on the road of the goddess in a chariot escorted by the Heliades, who can beguile Dike, who guards the gate of night and day, to pass it and reach the nameless goddess to hear the truth from her lips (SE 7.111 = B1). How many of the mortals can say they made such a ride?

For Parmenides, there are two spheres: what exists – Being, and what does not exist – the realm of appearance or opinion. Appearance is the way of manifestation of Being in the mind of mortals, a reflection of Being distorted by the senses. Man's natural faculties cannot by themselves give true knowledge, so that the knowledge humans possess is inherently distorted, and as such, it pertains to nonbeing. It gives a distorted image of Being and misleads humans by suggesting that it represents the truth. But the level of distortion can vary from one person to another. If the image of our face seen in the mirror is just an image, not the face itself, the characteristics of the mirror, light, surrounding air, our mood, and so on may make distortion much greater than in an ideal setting when the mirror is of ideal purity, and there is ideal lighting, the air is pure, and so forth. There are thus some objective laws of perception in accordance to which perception can bring a clearer or more obfuscated image of reality although the image will always be somewhat distorted – because it is an image. Therefore, within the limits of their perceptual abilities, the mortals can acquire knowledge that has some degree of reliability. Furthermore, this is the issue which the goddess addresses when she wants to present to Parmenides the "likely-seeming arrangement so that no thought of mortals may outstrip" him (Simplicius, *In Phys.* 39.9–10 = B8.60–61) and his opinion should be accepted (B1.28). If mortals were using their natural cognitive abilities to the fullest, then they would be able to reach opinion which should be accepted and perceive the

[3] We can also refer to the image given in the seventeenth century by Pedro Calderón de la Barca in the title of his play, *Life is a Dream*. Such a view of perception in the Parmenidean world can be found in the statement that "the phenomenal world is of the nature of a hallucination or dream," William K.C. Guthrie, *A History of Greek Philosophy* (Cambridge: University Press, 1965), vol. 2, p. 75.

likely-seeming arrangement of what appears to them to be reality and truth. They would know that earth is rooted in water (B15a), they would know the arrangements of rings around the earth (Simplicius, *In De caelo* 559.22–25 = B11), and they would know the nature of aether (Clement, *Strom.* 5.138.1 = B10.1). This is the best they could do with their natural cognitive endowment. They would know the best – and most reliable – appearance of reality, but still not the reality itself. This, at least, would indicate to the mortals the existence of some order that underlies the appearance, that there are some immutable laws discernible in the world of appearance, and that behind the incessant coming-to-be and perishing there are some regularities, something stable, always the same. In this mediated and imperfect form, they may have some feeling of true reality whose existence can be suspected; but to be seen, this reality has to be revealed by special grace, but not perceived. Yet this is still a perception through a mirror, with hints to reality, perception far from perfect certainty.

Although to some extent reliable, human knowledge, the way of opinion, is not true and thus false. For Parmenides, the division between different types of knowledge does not recognize different shades of reliability. Regardless of the saturation of the way of opinion with elements of truth, these elements will never convert the way of opinion into the way of truth. It is like comparing the infinite and the finite: regardless of the length of a finite interval, its length is of infinitesimal magnitude when compared with the length of the entire infinite line. But we can compare the finite intervals, and the results will vary with the lengths of the intervals. Similarly, the degrees of reliability of human opinions can be compared with one another, and some opinions will be clearly better than others. Some opinions are thus recommended by the goddess as reliable.[4] Within the way of opinion the shades of truth are recognizable. In the way of truth, there is only one shade or one intensity of the light of truth, just like within perfection of Being, we cannot say that "Being exists as though it were more of a Being here and less there" because Being is completed (Simplicius, *In Phys.* 146.15,20–21 = B8.42,47–48).

It is stressed by the goddess that Parmenides "would neither know that which is not … nor indicate it" (Proclus, *In Tim.* 1.345.18–27 = B2.7–8), and it is impossible "to speak or to think about what does not exist" (B8.8–9) because "it is the same to know and to be" (Plotinus, *Enneads* 5.1.8 = B3). Yet for the mortals "to be and not to be is considered the same and not the same" (Simplicius, *In Phys.* 117.12–13 = B6.8–9), and the custom forces them to accept that "nonexisting things exist" (Plato, *Soph.* 237a, SE 7.111 = B7.1–3). It seems that Parmenides is talking about true knowledge accessible to the enlightened minds and everyday knowledge of the mortals untouched by the goddess. Even opinions that should be accepted do not show reality as it is. As such, opinions refer to what does not exist and thus present a distorted image of reality; this image may induce a conviction that we have contact with reality. Yet, we do not. In the perception of reality there are no degrees. If Being were incomplete, if it were in need

[4] Therefore, it is not true that "if the discourse of the goddess is deceptive, it must be absolutely wrong," as claimed by Tarán, *Parmenides*, p. 207. The discourse of the goddess is wrong when compared with the truth, but it is not so wrong when compared with human knowledge. Truth is the same as absolute truth, but there is a gamut of falsehoods and, as a matter of fact, absolute falsehood seems to be largely nonexistent: everyone's opinion has some level of reliability.

of something, it would be in need of everything, and so it is with knowledge of Being. If this knowledge were lacking something, it would lack everything, but it certainly would not be knowledge about Being as it is, and thus it would be an appearance of knowledge. Knowledge of Being does not come in degrees, just as Being does not come in degrees. Being simply is, and so genuine knowledge about Being has only one semantic dimension – truthfulness. Partial knowledge about Being amounts to no knowledge about Being at all. Partial knowledge is at best an acceptable opinion, but not true knowledge. If it is thought to be such, then mortals are falling pray to self-deception by assuming that nonexisting things exist.

Logos

How is it possible that Parmenides, or any mortal, can recognize truth? The goddess says that *logos* – which is reason, reasoning, reasoning faculty, or, in Diogenes Laertius' words, the criterion of truth (9.22 = A1) – should be the judge of the wise man (B7.5).[5] Man is thus able to find the truth; however, this ability has to be enabled by the goddess. *Logos* is a divine element in man because the goddess uses it to expound the way of truth (B8.50). The reasoning ability is dormant in man, and it takes divine intervention to unearth it.[6] *Logos* is thus a part of *noos*,[7] but not all men even know they possess it. *Noos* left to its own devices remains on the way of opinion. The division between the way of truth and the way of opinion is of an epistemological nature and stems from human cognitive abilities. Everyone has *noos*, everyone has *logos*, but the latter is active only among the chosen few. *Logos* allows man to know reality as it is. Through *logos* the veil of appearance can be lifted and man can stand face-to-face with Being, one, indivisible, and eternal. *Noos* by itself is strangled by perception which directs it to appearance.

However, Parmenides receives the revelation through the senses: he sees and hears the goddess. Because cognition of mortals is inherently bound to the senses, this is also the avenue of revealing the truth. However, if revelation ended here, Parmenides would have as faulty knowledge after revelation as before. The knots of sensory experience have to be cut, so to speak, to know the truth, to have reliable knowledge about Being. Therefore, revelation is a process of activating *logos* with the help of sensory experience so that *logos* can later act on its own by relying on no

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[5] *Logos* is a "decisive instance" and "corrective element" in cognition, human "intellectual center," and it has the "decisive and general validity as the source of cognition," Anathon Aall, *Geschichte der Logosidee in der griechischen Philosophie* (Leipzig, 1896; reprinted Frankfurt am Main: Minerva, 1968), p. 6.

[6] The statement that men's and the goddess's *logoi* "are basically identical" as stated by W.J. Verdenius, 'Der Logosbegriff bei Heraklit und Parmenides', *Phronesis* 12 (1967), p. 101, would mean that the goddess presents the truth to herself. Identity may mean at best identity of nature or essence of the *logoi*.

[7] Notwithstanding an opinion that there is no difference between *logos* and *noos*, expressed by Karl Bormann, *Parmenides: Untersuchungen zu den Fragmenten* (Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 1971), p. 215 note 10.

perception and using only its reasoning powers.[8] *Logos* cuts *noos* off from perception, thereby allowing *noos* to see beyond appearance, beyond the obvious, and yet the misleading, the changeable and as such untrue. By relying on *logos* activated by the goddess, mortals can touch immortal reality.[9] This reality is the thing in itself whose existence is not only posited, as in Kant, but also accessible, unlike in Kant. Pure cognition can reach the thing in itself, but the purity of cognition is not accessible to all. Knowledge about the true Being has to be acquired, as in Kant, but unlike in Plato, according to whom all the knowledge about true reality is already in us and it has to be awakened by an appropriate training. No training would suffice for Parmenides. We do not possess dormant knowledge about true reality, but we do possess dormant ability to gain this knowledge. Plato was thus more democratic than Parmenides in that human means were sufficient to know the truth. To Parmenides, only the elect can know the truth which is not readily available in us, but a faculty to find this knowledge is, and the faculty can be stirred into action only through the divine enlightenment.[10] It is no accident that Parmenides' poem begins with a description of ascension to the goddess, the enlightener, and not with the description of the way of truth. After all, "the man who knows" (B1.3) is the one who is carried in the chariot escorted by the Heliades and not a man who tries to reason by himself.

The ability to grasp the truth brings mortals closer to the divine. The opening of the mind's eye to the truth is a gift of the goddess. Similarly, humans can be raised

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[8] Therefore, the view should be rejected that "Parmenides' revelation would be of supersensory, but not mental, nature – a manifestation of truth in form of transcendental light with all the properties disqualifying the physico-sensory world," Hans von Steuben, 'Wahrheit und Gesetz. Die Offenbarung des Parmenides', in Parmenides, *Über das Sein* (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1981), p. 182. On the contrary, the revelation is the divine way of activating the mental faculty through the medium of sensory experience so that the mind – thanks to *logos* – can know about the transcendental light, but not see it.

[9] This interpretation relies on considering *logos* the phrase κρῖναι λόγῳ (B7.5) to be used in instrumental dative ("using reason", "with reason"), although sometimes an opinion is expressed that this is modal dative ("through argumentation", "through proving"), Verdenius, 'Der Logosbegriff bei Heraklit und Parmenides', 100, Nestor-Luis Cordero, 'La Déesse de Parménide, maîtresse de philosophie', in J.F. Mattéi (ed.), *La Naissance de la raison en Gréce* (Paris: PUF, 1990), pp. 211, 213. But this does not significantly change the proposed interpretation. We can now say that there is an unnamed faculty of *noos* that is responsible for proving, and the faculty has to be awakened by the goddess to perform its work. With the instrumental dative, the faculty, *logos*, is named and its working is inferred from the poem. With the modal dative, the functionality of the faculty, *logos*, is named, but the faculty itself remains unmentioned.

[10] Knowledge of truth is "a gift that he [man] owes to higher powers," Karl Deichgräber, *Parmenides' Auffahrt zur Göttin des Rechts* (Mainz: Akademie der Wissenschaften und der Literatur, 1959), p. 24; similarly Bormann, *Parmenides*, pp. 61, 120, 126. "Only by revelation can a glimpse of and communication with reality be obtained," A.A. Long, 'The principles of Parmenides' cosmogony', in Reginald E. Allen and David J. Furley (eds), *Studies in Presocratic Philosophy* (Atlantic Highlands: Humanities Press, 1975), vol. 2, p. 97. "Parmenides can leave behind himself human existence only through an intervention of a personal divine power" to receive a revelation which remains unexplained and unexplainable, Jaap Mansfeld, *Die Offenbarung des Parmenides und die menschliche Welt* (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1964), p. 261; see also, von Steuben, 'Wahrheit und Gesetz', pp. 180–183.

to the level of the gods by becoming immortal, but this was a gift received from the gods who are inherently immortal. So perception of truth is also a gift of the gods. Parmenides insists that mortals wander around knowing nothing, mute and blind (B6.4–7), and he can repeat after Alcmaeon of Croton that "the gods have clarity about the invisible and the perishing and man can only explain by signs or derive consequences" (24B1).[11] Only the gods know.

Being

What does Parmenides learn about Being? One thing that Parmenides enlightened by the goddess proves is that Being is outside time and space. Parmenides does it by using spatial and temporal arguments and showing the contradictions to which they lead. He says that Being, which is whole, continuous, and unmoved (B8.4,6), and thus immutable, is without beginning and without end (B8.3,27), and yet neither was it nor will it be since it is now, all together (B8.5). Had Being been in time, it would have been a subject of temporal change; although no other attributes of Being could remain the same, the temporal attribute – its position in a particular point of time – would constantly change.[12] Hence, Being has no beginning or end because it is outside of time. Even the question about its beginning is ill-posed: we cannot ask, "Does Being have beginning?" or, in past tense, "Did Being exist?" because such questions already suggest that Being is immersed in time. But it is not – it is an extratemporal entity about which we can predicate that it is, that it exists in an eternal now.

Being is also outside space. Parmenides uses the imagery of Being's limits, but these limits cannot be of a spatial nature. Had there been any limits, there would have been another Being outside the limits of Being, which is inadmissible, because Being is one, indivisible.[13]

If all characteristics of Being are to be the same, it must be outside of time and so exist eternally, without beginning or end – exist outside the confines of time but inside limits of transcendent existence.[14] Perfect existence requires that this existence has limits within which it remains;[15] beyond these limits there is change unfitting the

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[11] Cf. Ernst Heitsch, *Parmenides und die Anfänge der Erkenntniskritik und Logik* (Donauwörth: Ludwig Auer, 1979), pp. 19, 74–75, 100.

[12] Cf. Plato, *Timaeus* 37e–38a.

[13] Cf. Tarán, *Parmenides*, pp. 116, 152. It is quite puzzling that Parmenides would have "had no impulse to ask himself" what is outside boundaries of Being assumed to have been spherical had the boundaries been interpreted spatially, as surmised by Guthrie, *A History of Greek Philosophy*, vol. 2., p. 46. Although Parmenides mentions boundaries of stars in B10.7, which are obviously understood spatially, the spatial meaning should not be directly carried to boundaries of Being because the former pertains to the way of opinion, the latter to the way of truth, Bormann, *Parmenides*, p. 164.

[14] The transcendent character of the limit is strongly emphasized by von Steuben, 'Wahrheit und Gesetz', p. 112. On the extraspatial and extratemporal character of Being, see also Johannes H. Loenen, *Parmenides, Melissus, Gorgias* (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1959), pp. 62–63, 69, 175.

[15] As once rightly observed, the limit, πεῖρας, "is the mark of *invariancy*," G.E.L. Owen, 'Eleatic questions', in Allen and Furley, *Studies in Presocratic Philosophy*, p. 65.

true Being, beyond these limits there is the realm of the perceptible, of the mutable in time and space.

How is the timeless and spaceless character of Being reconciled with the fact that many times in his poem Parmenides stresses the importance of limits? He says that justice, Dike, never loosed the shackles, but holds them fast; otherwise, Being would come into being or perish (B8.13–15). Also, Being is changeless within the limits of great bonds because strong necessity, Ananke, holds Being within the bonds of a limit, which encircles it (B8.26, 30–31). The grip of Dike assures us that it is just that Being is within limits if it is to be a true Being. The hold of Ananke makes certain that whole, immutable, and continuous Being necessarily has to be within limits. This necessity is just, this justice is necessary.[16] The identity of Being as Being is necessitated by justice; the necessary assumption of existence – the true existence of true Being – is the just law which establishes the limit between Being and nonbeing. The law of justice, the moral law, is a foundation of Being; its existence is a moral necessity; the moral law is the principle and the nature, the *arche*, of existence. In this, Parmenides assigns in his systems a different role to justice than Anaximander.

For Anaximander, the world is separated from an uncreated and imperishable *Apeiron* and the principal law underlying all events in the world is the principle of justice: the processes in the world take place because things come into being and are destroyed, which happens because they "pay penalty and retribution to each other for their injustice according to the order of time" (12B1). The moral law is the law of the world and because the world is not eternal, the law of justice must dwell in the *Apeiron*. Parmenides limits the validity of the moral law to Being. Processes perceived in the world are the result of the distorting perception which gives an appearance that things are what they seem to be. The processes have no objective validity; they are subjective and hence deceptive renderings of true reality. As such, they hardly could be considered just and necessary. The moral law is the law of Being located outside the confines of time and space. Inside the spatio-temporal framework there is no objectivity, no justice, no necessity. In this, Parmenides spiritualizes the moral law even more than Anaximander.[17] Anaximander constructed his *Apeiron* by extracting the essence of divinity, which he saw in infinity and moral law. But, like Hesiod and Homer, he did not separate rigidly the divine from the realm of the mortals. For Anaximander, the moral law of justice, although divine in nature, manifests itself in the world. For Parmenides, the moral law is divine so that it does not enter the realm of the perceptible world because this world is not real, it is the result of the operation of the human sensory apparatus and naming conventions (B8.38–41). Only later Plato creates a more moderate system by assuming that

[16] "Ananke is a personified, deified shackle of Being;" Dike possesses a curbing, binding power, so that "Dike and Ananke must have the same reality as the limit with which they are identical," von Steuben, 'Wahrheit und Gesetz', pp. 127, 129, 134. This identification is accepted by Victor Ehrenburg, *Die Rechtsidee im frühen Griechentum* (Leipzig, 1921; reprinted Stuttgart: Hirzel, 1966), p. 92, and, with some reservations, by Verdenius, 'Der Logosbegriff bei Heraklit und Parmenides', p. 100.

[17] And in this sense it may be correct to say that Parmenides' system is a commentary on Anaximander, Heinz Ambronn, *Apeiron-eon-kenon: Zum Arché-Begriff bei den Vorsokratikern* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1996), p. 125.

an extratemporal realm is prior to the world and, with it, time is created by the Demiurge; the moral law manifests itself in the world, if only indirectly, because the idea of ideas is the idea of the good and everything which exists is an instantiation of an idea that constitutes the domain of being.

The attributes of Being indicate its nature. Being is uncreated and imperishable, whole, one, unmoved, without end, in the perpetual now, continuous (B8.3–6). In the traditional religion, immortality was a primary characteristic of the gods, which distinguished them from the mortals. Being is also immortal, or rather it exists in the eternal now, indestructible. Thus Being is endowed with divine attributes. But it has more attributes which the mythological gods do not possess. No god, not even Zeus, is uncreated, unmoved, continuous. Parmenides' Being, however, is. Being is a divine entity, but its divinity vastly surpasses the divinity of traditional gods. Parmenides' Being is a divinity in pure form, the essence of divinity abstracted from the world of the gods of mythology.

The process of abstracting the essence of divinity is brought to a higher level by Parmenides than in his predecessors. Divinity is not only infinite (at least with respect to duration), not only immutable, one, but also continuous and, most of all, constitutes the true reality. If divinity is perceived in any other way, falsehood prevails and human opinion takes priority over truth. For Parmenides, Being is God, Being is the purest form of divinity, untainted by the attributes ascribed to mythological gods. Being is God, who is elevated above the level of the realm accessible to sensory perception; transcendent God, who is the only one that embodies divine attributes. Although in the extant fragments Parmenides does not identify Being with God, Aetius informs us that he did call his unmoved Being God (1.7.26 = A31).[18]

What is the relation of the goddess who instructs Parmenides to such an elevated concept of divinity? Also, what is the relation of the goddess to other divine figures Parmenides mentions in his poem? Some say that the goddess (δαίμων) on whose way Parmenides is traveling (B1.3) is the same goddess (θεά) that reveals to him the ways of the truth and of opinion (B1.22) and the same as Dike (B1.14,28),[19] which is the view espoused already by Sextus (*Adv. math.* 7.113). In this, Parmenides would

[18] Thus, it is true that "for Parmenides there is only God, for Aristotle there is God and the world," as observed in passing by Jules Simon, É*tudes sur la théodicée de Platon et d'Aristote* (Paris: Joubert, 1840), p. 22. It is also observed that Parmenides introduced "the absolute unity which contemplates itself in the pure depths of its inaccessible existence, a God without possible world," Désiré Henne, *École de Mégare* (Paris: Joubert, 1843), p. 39. Cicero says that the sky is encompassed by a fiery crown which Parmenides calls God. If this is the sky guided by Ananke in B10, then the fiery crown is outside the sky and can be identified with transcendent Being, Olof Gigon, *Der Ursprung der griechischen Philosophie* (Basel: Schwabe, 1968), pp. 279–281; von Steuben, 'Wahrheit und Gesetz', pp. 152–153.

[19] The goddess is at first anonymous and then her name is revealed, just like the Heliades are named only after they are first mentioned as maidens (1.5,8), Mansfeld, *Die Offenbarung des Parmenides*, pp. 261–262, 270; Deichgräber announces the identification of Dike with the goddess in the title of his work. In this context, Mourelatos calls the goddess a polymorph deity, Alexander P.D. Mourelatos, *The Route of Parmenides* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1970), pp. 26, 29, 160–161, 252. See also A.H. Coxon, *The Fragments of Parmenides* (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1986), p. 166.

follow the then popular view that Dike knows all things and so she can lead to truth.[20] Others deny the validity of such an identification.[21] It seems, however, that both sides can be reconciled.

Parmenides stresses very strongly the unreliability of the senses that lead to false opinions and to false images of reality, and yet the goddess of the proem is talking to him (B1.23, 2.1). The goddess must get through to Parmenides in such a way that he, a mortal, can receive her message, that is, in the perceptual fashion, by speaking to him, which – to be sure – involves not only Parmenides' understanding, but also his hearing. Also, on his way to the goddess, Parmenides sees many different things: the road, the gate, the Heliades, and so on, but also he sees Dike who guards the gate and the access to the goddess. Is his vision deceiving him? If it does not, then he first sees Dike and then another divinity, the nameless goddess. However, if the divine Being wants to reveal itself to a mortal, it can do it only in the way which is accessible to the mortal. And so it does by manifesting itself to Parmenides as the goddess or Dike. In this sense, the goddess and Dike are different because they are different manifestations of Being, but because they are manifestations of the same Being, they are the same, they are different aspects of the same underlying reality, they are different windows into the same truth.[22] In Parmenides' monotheism, there is no room for other deities, and the deities he mentions exist only as the means of communicating to the chosen mortals the only God's divine messages. The gods of mythology, and their frequently unsavoury actions, are mostly subjective entities shaped by human traditions. Parmenides' gods are the ways of God's revealing himself to the mortals, and in this sense objective entities, but their existence has no other purpose as being God's manifestation in the sensory realm.[23]

The case for divinity of Being can be strengthened by pointing to the fact that, because the goddess is an intelligent manifestation of Being, Being itself must be intelligent and conscious.[24] If Being is the totality of reality, and also an intelligent entity, then it is impossible to escape the possibility of seeing it as God. Also, Parmenides directly ascribes to truth, that is, to reality or Being, a cognitive characteristic – if with four sources we read in B1.29 εὐπειθέος instead of εὐκυκλέος,

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[20] Rudolf Hirzel, *Themis, Dike und Verwandtes* (Leipzig, 1907; reprinted Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1996), p. 116.

[21] von Steuben, 'Wahrheit und Gesetz', p. 104; Tarán, *Parmenides*, p. 16.

[22] As stated by Chalmers, the association of both Dike and Ananke with shackles could be an indication that "these are all manifestations of a single divine power and that Parmenides' attitude is basically monotheistic," W.R. Chalmers, 'Parmenides and the beliefs of mortals', *Phronesis* 5 (1960), p. 19.

[23] There is an opinion that different gods mentioned by Parmenides or by Cicero (*ND* 1.28 = A37) are thoughts of the goddess, "the manifestations of providence" (Mansfeld, *Die Offenbarung des Parmenides*, pp. 166–167, 194–195; Deichgräber, *Parmenides' Auffahrt zur Göttin des Rechts*, p. 36). First, the goddess herself is a manifestation of the divine; second, these manifestations exist only on account of the mortals, not in the mind of God.

[24] Being is "a conscious Being and the single but sufficient contents of its consciousness was the fact of existing," Hermann Fränkel, *Early Greek Poetry and Philosophy* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1975), pp. 365–366; there are strong indications that "Parmenides envisaged Being as Intelligence," Coxon, *The Fragments of Parmenides*, p. 181.

as given by Simplicius[25] – so that truth (reality) is persuasive, not well-rounded. In this way, "persuasive reality" exhibits "reflective activity beyond time and space."[26] Moreover, a follower of Parmenides, Melissus, explicitly discusses the impossibility for the Being to suffer pain or anguish and to be unhealthy (30B7). Being is thus at least assumed to be sentient, and it is not inconceivable that Melissus' denials are "the counterpart of a positive belief … in the divinity of reality."[27]

The process of elaborating on the concept of divinity leads from Anaximander's divine *Apeiron*, the seat of moral law, through the uncompromising monotheism of Xenophanes to the Parmenidean vision of God-Being that is the only reality and only truth, so grand that it is known only to the chosen few. This very naturally leads to Anaxagoras and the concept of the all-powerful, infinite *Nous* that gives birth to the universe from the prime matter. This *Nous* very early was identified with God. Also, from Parmenides' vision it is not far to Plato's Demiurge and the idea of the good and then to Plotinus, in particular to his doctrine of One which "is not in place nor is it in time" (*Enneads* 6.9.3), to the doctrine of ecstatic apperception of the One (6.9.11), to his ascetic life leading him to rejection of the sensory world (5.3.17, 5.5.13) and, also, to the image of the sphere (6.9.8, 2.9.17, 5.8.9). There is thus a good reason to say that Plotinus seems to be closest to Parmenides among ancient thinkers.[28]

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[25] Coxon, *The Fragments of Parmenides*, pp. 51, 168–169; Mourelatos, *The Route of Parmenides*, pp. 154–157; Mansfeld, *Die Offenbarung des Parmenides*, pp. 122, 157.

[26] Coxon, *The Fragments of Parmenides*, p. 216. Earlier, Plotinus mentions Parmenides' identification of Being with intellectual-principle (*Enneads* 5.1.8).

[27] G.S. Kirk, J.E. Raven, and M. Schofield, *The Presocratic Philosophers* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983), p. 397; the authors express this possibility in the form of a question.

[28] Pierre Somville, *Parménide d'Élée. Son temps et le nôtre* (Paris: Vrin, 1976), p. 82; cf. Fränkel, *Early Greek Poetry and Philosophy*, p. 356 note 17.

Chapter 5

Pythagoreanism and the *Harmonia*

In his *Theology of the Early Greek Philosophers*, Werner Jaeger makes only a few passing remarks about the Pythagorean theology. Gregory Vlastos, in a long paper on Greek theology, finds this fact disconcerting,[1] but he himself offers very little to rectify this omission. Admittedly, the dearth of sources justifies such treatment; however, it is, in fact, disconcerting that the works on theology say very little on the theology of Pythagoreanism, whose founder is known primarily as a religious sage, a diviner, and a prophet and is considered by many to be a god.[2] The Pythagorean brotherhood is considered to have had primarily a religious character.

Unfortunately, the three surviving *vitae* of Pythagoras authored by Diogenes Laertius, Porphyry, and Iamblichus were written centuries after Pythagoras' death. The authors refer to their sources, although not always, but, first, oftentimes these sources are suspect, and second, the sources may not necessarily be followed very closely. A disquieting fact is that the later the *vita*, the more detailed it is. However, except for very short references to Pythagoras by early authors (in particular, by Heraclitus, Xenophanes, and Empedocles), these *vitae* have to be treated as a main source of Pythagoras' life and views. Plato refers to Pythagoras by name only once, saying that he showed others how to live and was a founder of a certain way of life (*Rep.* 600b). Aristotle has also very few direct references to Pythagoras and discusses primarily the views of the Pythagoreans as a group, only sometimes with the qualification that the views are held by some Pythagoreans.

Archai

Pythagoras created a group of staunch followers whose goal was primarily to lead a pure life. The principle of life of this communistic group ("friends have all in common") was "worship of the gods and respect for the departed, lawgiving, education, control of speech, mercy toward living things, self-control, temperance, alertness of mind and likeness to God" (Iamblichus, *VP* 32). All of human conduct should be "in agreement with the divine. This is the principle; all of life is so ordered as to follow God" (137 = 58D2, 86–87). The principle means that "God is not only

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[1] Gregory Vlastos, 'Theology and philosophy in Early Greek thought', in D.J. Furley and R.E. Allen (eds), *Studies in Presocratic Philosophy* (New York: Humanities Press, 1975), vol. 1, p. 113.

[2] He was believed to be in direct communication with the divine which is said to be confirmed by the many miraculous occurrences in his life which made him in the eyes of followers a god, too, an incarnation of the Hyperborean Apollo (Iamblichus, *De vita Pythagorica* (*VP*) 30).

the guardian of the world order, but also can become someone to be approached and imitated."[3] It is absurd to seek the good anywhere except from the gods. "Since God exists and is lord of all, obviously we must ask our lord for what is good" (87, 137). That is, God is not only the source of what is good but also the source of knowledge of the good. One way of finding out the will of God is divination, "for that is our only interpreter of the mind of the gods" (138). But everyone cannot be a diviner. The truth can be learned from "those who know and these are few." A teacher should thus be chosen carefully because being such a teacher is a rarity, "for to form correct opinions and to understand belongs to only a few." One should learn from those "who are older and lived nobly" (200 = 58D8).

In particular, the foundation of human justice is established by the rule of the gods. "The divine power exists and is disposed towards the human race" (Iamblichus, *VP* 174 = 58D3); that is, the gods by nature are benevolent beings and as such only the gods can be the source of human legal and moral laws. The recognition of the rule of the gods guarantees that no one will rebel against them. Humans are by nature imperfect – they are "naturally aggressive" and are driven by emotions and desires – and therefore require a superhuman control. This, ideally, should be done through the means of a theocratic government, the unmediated government of the divine over the human sphere. A primary way of submission to such a rule is constant piety and worship of the divine whereby one can "always keep in mind that God watches over human progress" (175 = 58D3). This, however, is a rare gift and thus one should turn to those who know, and, to be sure, Pythagoras is such a one.

For those who are not so advanced as Pythagoras, the obedience to parents and current laws and customs is the second best. The fact that the parental and societal rules are rules makes them faint reflections of divine rules. The worst thing that can happen is rejection of all the rules because "anarchy is the greatest evil." Unconstrained freedom is unacceptable since the imperfection of human nature eventually leads men astray and thus "a man should never be allowed to do as he likes" (Iamblichus, *VP* 203 = 58D8).

In all aspects of life, following God is constantly stressed. If this is so important – most important – then it is obvious that something has to be known about God to make appealing imitating and following him. Who is this God? Unfortunately, no explicit theology was left by Pythagoras or by his immediate followers. In one respect, this problem may not have arisen in some followers of Pythagoras. These followers were divided into two groups, *mathematici* and *acusmatici*: the former group got to fathom the theological mysteries, the latter was to follow the precepts of Pythagoras (Porphyry, *VP* 37 = 18B2). But at least to the *mathematici* the theological problems were real.

There are some indications of how the divinity was understood by the early Pythagoreans. A good starting point is the *tetraktys*, whose paramount importance is indicated by the fact that it was included in the Pythagorean oath. The Pythagoreans swore by Pythagoras, that is, "by him who brought *tetraktys* to our kind, in which

[3] Leopold Schmidt, *Die Ethik der alten Griechen* (Berlin: Hertz, 1882; reprinted Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt: Frommann, 1964), p. 167.

is the source and the root of everflowing nature" (SE 7.94; Aetius 1.3.8 = 58A15). The *tetraktys*, or tetrad, is a system of the first four positive integers, 1, 2, 3, and 4. It contains the ratios of musical harmony. "It is no doubt that Empedocles knew the old oath," otherwise he would not refer to the four roots (31B6.1) and the source of all mortal things (31B23.10).[4] The *tetraktys* was considered to contain the nature of the universe (Theon of Smyrna 154)[5] and was called *kosmos*, *ouranos*, *pan* (Plutarch, *De Is. et Os.* 75) and also *decad* because the first four integers which add up to 10 (= 1 + 2 + 3 + 4). It represents all harmonies because the four numbers of the *tetraktys* are used in the harmonic ratios of fourth, fifth, and octave. It is also called the oracle of Delphi (Iamblichus, *VP* 85 = 58C4) because is encompasses the truth which – like all Delphic pronouncements – is not immediately apparent.[6] Although not all the meanings behind the *tetraktys* can be clear to us, and although not all the associations with *tetraktys* have to go back to Pythagoras, its importance for the Pythagoreans is undeniable. One thing is clear, namely that the *tetraktys* refers to the harmonious nature of the world. The world is ordered on all levels. The order can be discovered in the heavens, in the soul, and in music. This orderliness is reflected in numerical proportions and thus the role of a sage is to find in nature the harmony through which nature exists and to reflect this harmony in numbers.

Importantly, the *tetraktys* was also called "the harmony in which the Sirens sing" (Iamblichus, *VP* 82 = 58C4), which is "the universal harmony and the music of the spheres" (65). In the tale of Er recounted by Plato, one Siren was next to each orbit singing a single note, "and the concord of the eight notes produced a single harmony" (*Rep.* 617b). This reinforces the reliability of ascribing to the Pythagoreans the doctrine of the harmony of the spheres or the music of the spheres.[7] Aristotle tells us that the Pythagoreans believed that the heavenly bodies produce musical notes in their revolutions and that the pitch of the notes depends on the velocities of the bodies; the velocities, in turn depend on the distances of the bodies from the earth, which were according to the same ratios as the consonant intervals of the octave. It is strongly suggested that the fixed stars also participated in this heavenly symphony

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[4] Walther Kranz, 'Kosmos als philosophischer Begriff frühgriechischer Zeit', *Philologus* 93 (1938), p. 438. Walter Burkert, *Lore and Science in Ancient Pythagoreanism* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1972), p. 186, turns the argument around by saying that the second verse of the oath "can scarcely be older than Empedocles," and refers to Kranz giving an impression that it is also Kranz's opinion. Burkert is followed by James A. Philip, *Pythagoras and Early Pythagoreanism* ([Toronto:] University of Toronto Press, 1966), pp. 97–98.

[5] Theon of Smyrna distinguishes in his *Exposition of Mathematics Useful for Understanding Plato* eleven symbolic meanings of the *tetraktys*; see also Paul Kucharski, *Étude sur la doctrine pythagoricienne de la tétrade* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1952), pp. 31–39. A comprehensive study of the *tetraktys* is given by Armand Delatte, *Études sur littérature pythagoricienne* (Paris: Champion, 1915), pp. 249–268.

[6] See also Kucharski, *Étude sur la doctrine pythagoricienne de la tétrade*, pp. 75–77.

[7] The phrase "the harmony of the spheres" is later than Pythagoras, because the use of spheres only begins with Eudoxus; for earlier times, the phrase "the harmony of the heavens" would be more appropriate, Burkert, *Lore and Science in Ancient Pythagoreanism*, p. 351 note 1; Leonid J. Zhmud, *Wissenschaft, Philosophie und Religion im frühen Pythagoreismus* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1997), p. 219.

(Aristotle, *De caelo* 290b12–15). The Pythagoreans were convinced that harmonic ratios govern both music and the cosmos (290b12–291a28; fr. 203). This conviction went so far as to override the testimony of the senses. Because the Pythagoreans were convinced that ten is a perfect number, they introduced an anti-earth to have ten celestial bodies (in addition to the sphere of fixed stars, five planets, the sun, the moon, and the earth), which is a conviction that incensed Aristotle greatly (*Met.* 986a3–12).[8] Also, because the motion of bodies, particularly large ones, generates sound, the motion of really large celestial bodies also generates sound. However, because we are used to these sounds, we cannot hear them. It takes someone like Pythagoras to be able to hear these sounds (Iamblichus, *VP* 65–66, Porphyry, *VP* 30 = 31B129).

The Pythagoreans did not treat the image of the music of the spheres as a mere metaphor. This was a real phenomenon which caused explanatory problems of its own. How can the ten bodies be related to the octave? Many, not infrequently tortuous, efforts were made to resolve the difficulty.[9] There was even disagreement about the relative velocities of the celestial bodies movements. According to Philolaus, the closer a planet is to the center of the world, the faster it moves (which is an order followed by Plato, *Tim.* 39a). In the Pythagorean system described by Aristotle (fr. 203), it is exactly the opposite. However, these differences, important as they are from a scientific point of view, are overshadowed by metaphysical assumption of the first order: the world is harmonious, whether we can explain it in terms of musical harmony or not, and our thwarted efforts to explain it accordingly speak not against the assumption but against the efforts. For a Pythagorean, it would just be a matter of time to find a satisfactory explanation of the astronomical phenomena, but the assumption about the existence of harmony stands regardless of the success – or the lack thereof – of scientific attempts to create an astronomical theory. This is undeniably one of the most important legacies of Pythagoreanism. Today's scientist would hardly struggle to provide a theory that reconciles natural phenomena with musical scales,[10] but the same scientist is convinced that an explanation of each phenomenon always exists even if we cannot immediately provide any. This is based on the assumption of the uniformity of nature (cf. Einstein's cosmological principle) and the conviction that natural laws are always the same. In other words, nature is harmonious, regular, ordered.

Because the principles of universal harmony and the inner harmony of the human soul can be found in the musical scale, it is not surprising that Pythagoras was interested in music. This interest has a very practical consequence. The knowledge of proportions that underlie music improves education and leads to the betterment of man. "The original harmony of the soul's powers" can be restored through "songs

[8] Pythagoras is said to have made the nine Muses from the voices of these nine phenomena. The symphony of the nine Muses he called Mnemosyne of which they are "parts and emanations as from ungenerated eternity" (Porphyry, *VP* 31).

[9] Anthelme-Edouard Chaignet, *Pythagore et la philosophie pythagoricienne* (Paris: Didier, 1873; reprinted Brussels: Culture et Civilisation, 1968), pp. 150–155; Burkert, *Lore and Science in Ancient Pythagoreanism*, pp. 355–356; Gerald E. Tauber, *Man and the Cosmos* (New York: Greenwich House, 1982), p. 41.

[10] Kepler once attempted a reconciliation of musical theory and cosmology.

and rhythms" by "healing human temperaments and passions" (Iamblichus, *VP* 64), and Pythagoras occupied himself with composing songs to destroy appetites (Porphyry, *VP* 34).[11] Pythagoras reportedly discovered that the concordant intervals of the musical scale, *harmonia*, can be expressed in terms of simple proportions: 1:2 for the octave, 3:2 for the fifth, and 4:3 for the fourth. The smallest numbers that fit these proportions are 6, 8, 9, and 12, which include the arithmetic mean, 12:9:6, and the harmonic mean, 12:8:6. The existence of such numerical ratios is extrapolated onto the entire world, and the whole world is determined by such ratios. These ratios determine the orderliness in the world, whereby the world is the cosmos, the ordered world.

The importance of the *tetraktys* is, in fact, an indication of the importance of the ubiquitous harmony. Harmonious order can be found at all levels of reality – in the small and in the large, on earth and above it, in individual life and in social life, in animate nature and in inanimate nature. Its most conspicuous manifestation is in music and in numerical proportions detected in it. Thus, in this sense, the idea of cosmic music "has nothing to do with mathematics or musical theory, but comes from a deeper root"; the idea has everything to do with "a pre-scientific conception of order,"[12] or harmony.

In the face of the importance ascribed to harmony, it should hardly surprise us that Pythagoras is credited with calling the world cosmos for the first time.[13] Testimonies that make this attribution are sometimes dismissed by pointing to Anaximander. However, the word *kosmos* is used not only in Anaximander's single quotation but also in descriptions of his system (12A9–11). The three descriptions come from the same source, namely Theophrastus, that is, from the time when the use of the word was well entrenched.[14] The three testimonies thus use terminology common in post-Aristotelian times to describe the sixth-century system of Anaximander. It does not mean, however, that the same usage of the word should also be attributed to Anaximander himself.[15] In the fragment, it is stressed that Anaximander introduced the word *arche* as a designation of the originative substance. No such priority claim

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[11] A Sicilian or Italian man says, according to Plato, that "our bodies are our tombs and that the part of our souls in which our appetites reside is … open to persuasion" (*Gorgias* 493a).

[12] Burkert, *Lore and Science in Ancient Pythagoreanism*, pp. 355, 357.

[13] "Pythagoras first named cosmos that which surrounds the whole on account of the order in it," Aetius 2.1.1 = 14.21; cf. Iamblichus, *VP* 37, 59, 162; Favorinus in DL 8.48 = 28A44; Photius, *Bibl.* 440a27; Achilles Tatius, *Isag.* 5. It is difficult to accept a brusque statement that "the history of the word … speaks, however, decisively against the thesis of such a programmatic invention of the concept at the very beginning of Greek philosophy," Burkert, *Lore and Science in Ancient Pythagoreanism*, p. 77.

[14] Also, "the Anaximander quotation is derived from the same doxographic tradition that ascribes to Pythagoras discovery of the concept *kosmos*, where, of course, by discovery we should understand the transfer of this concept onto the whole of the world," Zhmud, *Wissenschaft, Philosophie und Religion im frühen Pythagoreismus*, p. 292.

[15] "No ancient author, it is true, tells us that Anaximander spoke of the world as a *kosmos*," Charles H. Kahn, 'Anaximander's fragment: the universe governed by law', in A.P.D. Mourelatos (ed.), *The Pre-Socratics* (Garden City: Anchor Books, 1974), p. 111.

is made about the word *kosmos*. However, even if Anaximander used this word in reference to the universe, the usage was not as striking and groundbreaking, as, on the one hand, the use of *arche*, and, on the other hand, the use of *kosmos* by Pythagoras. Calling the world the cosmos indicates that the orderliness of the universe was of paramount importance to Pythagoras; so important that it becomes a defining feature of the universe. The ontological significance of harmony is undeniable: harmony is a cosmic principle according to which the world is ordered. Are there any other principles? In an attempt to answer this question we have to turn to Philolaus.

There is no known Pythagorean writing from the sixth century. Therefore, as already observed by Claudianus Mamertus (*De statu animae* 2.3 = 44B22), "the opinion of Pythagoras has to be sought from his successors," among whom "Philolaus of Tarentum was the very most distinguished."[16] This fifth-century writer is regarded as the first Pythagorean to ever publish a book (DL 8.15, 8.85 = 44A1; Iamblichus, *VP* 199 = 14.17).[17]

Philolaus considers harmony as a necessary element for creation of the cosmos. The two pre-existing principles, the limiters and the unlimiteds, are "not alike or of the same kind; it would have been impossible for them to be ordered if harmony had not supervened" (Stobaeus 1.21.7d = 44B6), but Philolaus does not say what is the origin of harmony. It simply exists to assure that the universe is ordered. The limiters and the unlimiteds always existed, and they were used to create the cosmos. This creation is only possible if harmony exists; otherwise, only a disorderly and incoherently woven whole would arise, not the cosmos.[18] It must be thus assumed that harmony is coeval with the two principles, the limiters and the unlimiteds, just like the ideas, recepticle, prime matter, and the Demiurge are coeternal in Plato's universe. There are, thus, three principles in Philolaus' universe that are needed to create the cosmos we know: the limiters, the unlimiteds, and harmony, and the first two principles are included in the being (ἐστώ).

It is important to remember that Philolaus refers to limiters (περαίνοντα) and unlimiteds (ἄπειρα) in the plural: the neuter plural of the adjective ἄπειρος and the neuter plural of the present active participle of the verb περαίω. Plato and Aristotle use abstract expressions in the singular: τὸ πέρας, τὸ πεπερασμένον, τὸ ἄπειρον or even ἡ περαίνουσα φύσις – the limiting nature (Aristotle, fr. 47) and ἡ τοῦ ἀπείρου φύσις – the nature of the unlimited (Plato, *Philebus* 24e).[19] This means that the two principles, limiters and unlimiteds, are compound, or they are sets of principles.

What are these two principles? Sometimes, the limit is identified with the one (τὸ ἕν), the unlimited with the dyad.[20] But the one, as understood by Philolaus,

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[16] See also Charles H. Kahn, *Pythagoras and the Pythagoreans: a brief history* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 2001), p. 36.

[17] Carl Huffman, *Philolaus of Croton* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), p. 15.

[18] "Through harmony – that is to be taken in analogy to the musical [harmony], with which Philolaus begins – can the cosmos, the formed world in its order, emerging from dissimilar principles be formed," Jula Kerschensteiner, *Kosmos: quellenkritische Untersuchungen zu den Vorsokratikern* (Munich: Beck, 1962), p. 217.

[19] Huffman, *Philolaus of Croton*, pp. 39–40; Burkert, *Lore and Science in Ancient Pythagoreanism*, p. 253.

[20] August Boeckh, *Philolaos des Pythagoreer Lehren nebst den Bruchstücken seines Werkes*, Berlin: Vossische Buchhandlung 1819, 55.

is fitted together (Stobaeus 1.21.8 = 44B7); that is, it is a derived entity. Also, Aristotle expressly states that the idea of the dyad was introduced by Plato, not the Pythagoreans (*Met.* 987b25–27), unless we agree with Aetius' attribution of the monad-dyad distinction directly to Pythagoras (Aetius 1.3.8 = 58B15).[21] Moreover, the limit-unlimited pair is identified with the atom-void pair of the atomists,[22] but it seems precarious to ascribe to Philolaus an idea of the atom. It seems that the unlimiteds are continua, such as air or water, and the limiters are what is discrete,[23] which excludes an identification of the limit with fire.[24] This roughly corresponds to the analogy between limit-unlimited and matter-form.[25] They can constitute things in the universe in separation and in conjunction, and the orderliness – the harmony – of the universe apparently requires that the world is not made only out of the limiters, only out of the unlimiteds, or only out of the limiters-unlimiteds unions (Stobaeus 1.21.7a = 44B2). The prime principles can be interwoven separately between things that are made out of them together. Due to harmony, things in the world are proper unions of the limiters and unlimiteds, in proper proportion, and the world as a whole is a harmonious union of harmoniously created things, some of them being pure unlimiteds and pure limiters. In this way, something by itself being unlimited can function as a limiter as it is the case with the void.

Philolaus says that "nature in the cosmos was fitted together (harmonized) out of the unlimiteds and the limiters: both the cosmos and all the things in it" (DL 8.85 = 44B1, 44B2). Nature is simply unqualified universe, unlike *kosmos* which is the ordered universe. "Nature in the cosmos" means nature as it manifests itself in the ordered universe. It should not be identified with being,[26] which becomes clear when being and nature are put side by side and only being is emphatically pronounced to be eternal: "the being of things is eternal and nature in itself …" (44B6). That is, nature ("nature in itself") is not eternal and thus is created because the universe is created along with the order in it, so that the universe is also the cosmos.[27] Therefore, it is not true that for the Pythagoreans, "every definite unity is produced by the action of Limit

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[21] The Aetius fragment is thought to present Xenocrates' views, Hans J. Krämer, *Der Ursprung der Geistmetaphysik* (Amsterdam: Grüner, 1967), pp. 56–57, 79.

[22] Burkert, *Lore and Science in Ancient Pythagoreanism*, p. 259.

[23] Huffman, *Philolaus of Croton*, pp. 47–48, argues that the unlimiteds include continua, and the limiters are "things that set boundaries within a continuum." This seems to be also suggested by the statement that the musical scale is "the imposition of definite proportions on the indefinite continuum of sound," and so it is with limiters and unlimiteds, Giorgio di Santillana, *The Origins of Scientific Thought* (New York: Mentor Books, 1961), p. 59.

[24] John Burnet, *Early Greek Philosophy* (London: Macmillan, 1939; reprinted Cleveland: Meridian Books, 1957]), p. 109; Burnet's identification of the unlimited with darkness is, however, acceptable.

[25] Wilhelm Bauer, *Der ältere Pythagoreismus* (Bern: Steiger, 1897; reprinted Hildesheim: Olms, 1976), p. 220; the *Stoff-Gestaltung* connection is obviously derived from the Aristotelian categories.

[26] As conjectured by Huffman, *Philolaus of Croton*, p. 130.

[27] Scoon says that being (ἐστώ) is just the material substance, and so nature has two aspects, the active *harmonia* and the material *esto*, Robert Scoon, 'Philolaus, fragment 6, Diels, Stobaeus i.21.460', *Classical Philology* 17 (1922), p. 354.

upon the Unlimited, producing a 'harmony' which is essentially numerical."[28] The action of the limiters and the unlimiteds is possible because there is an independent *harmonia* that enables the action. The result of putting together the limiters and the unlimiteds is harmonious because *harmonia* caused the combination. Harmony was produced because it was already there at the beginning of the action.

Number

Aristoxenus said that "Pythagoras seems to have honored most of all the study of numbers and to have advanced it in withdrawing it from the use of merchants, likening all things to numbers. For number holds up (ἔχει) all other things and there is a proportion of all numbers to each other … Monad is the beginning of number and number is the plurality composed of monads" (Stobaeus 1 prooem. 6 = 58B2). A statement like this is an expression of the first reductionism in Western philosophy: everything is reduced to numbers. Probably no one attributed more weight to such a perception of Pythagoreanism than Aristotle who says that the Pythagoreans "construct the [whole of] nature out of numbers" (*De caelo* 300a16 = 58B38; Cicero, *Acad.* 2.118) and that they "bring (or reduce, ἀνάγουσι) all things to numbers" (Aristotle, *Met.* 1036b12 = 58B25). However, there are considerable doubts whether the Pythagoreans really espoused a view that the cosmos is made out of numbers. A convincing case is made for the view that this is just Aristotle's understanding of the essence of the Pythagorean philosophy.[29] It is significant, for example, that there are, in fact, at least three different and not quite compatible formulations of this doctrine: things are made out of numbers and so things are numbers (*Met.* 986a16, 987b28, 1083b11–12); things are similar to numbers and are modeled after them (985b27,33); and elements of numbers are elements of things (986a1–2,17–18).[30] Even in the course of a few lines, Aristotle uses three disparate views of number: things exist as imitations of numbers (987b11–12), numbers are causes of substance of things (b24–25), and things themselves are numbers (b28) and thus numbers are not separate from things (b29–31). However, it is almost certain that "what Aristotle found in the Pythagoreans was an attempt to relate properties of numbers to properties

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[28] Hugh Tredennick, Introduction, in Aristotle, *Metaphysics* (London: Heinemann, 1947), p. xvi.

[29] W.A. Heidel, '*Peras* and *apeiron* in the Pythagorean philosophy', *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie* 14 (1901), p. 393; Cecil C. Crawford, 'The Pythagorean philosophy of number', PhD dissertation (Saint Louis: Washington University, 1950), p. 87; Leonid J. Zhmud, 'All is number?', *Phronesis* 34 (1989), pp. 270–292; Zhmud, *Wissenschaft, Philosophie und Religion im frühen Pythagoreismus* , pp. 261–279; Carl Huffman, 'The role of number in Philolaus' philosophy', *Phronesis* 33 (1988), pp. 1–30; Huffman, *Philolaus of Croton*, pp. 56, 59, 179–180.

[30] Bauer, *Der ältere Pythagoreismus*, p. 10; F.M. Cornford, 'Mysticism and science in the Pythagorean tradition' [1922], in Mourelatos (ed.), *The Pre-Socratics*, p. 136; W.A. Heidel, 'The Pythagoreans and Greek mathematics' [1940], in Furley and Allen (eds), *Studies in Presocratic Philosophy*, p. 362; Zhmud, 'All is number?', p. 284; Huffman, *Philolaus of Croton*, p. 60.

of things."[31] It can be said that Aristotle confuses basic Pythagorean tenets so that he can easily conclude that their theory is not reasonable (988a1–2). But it may well be that the view was not as well crystallized as we would like it to be. It is instructive to look at what Philolaus has to say in his own words to see that Aristotle may have had a reason to see the Pythagorean theory of number in such a manner.

Philolaus says that "all things that are known have number; for it is not possible for anything to be understood or known without it" (Stobaeus 1.21.7b = 44B4). In this, epistemological significance of number is stressed, but this does not exclude the possibility of its objective existence. Philolaus says that there are two kinds of numbers, odd and even, and a third kind, the odd-even, which is "from both mixed together" (Stobaeus 1.21.7c = 44B5). It is difficult not to see in this statement that numbers are ontological entities existing objectively and independently of any cognitive process.[32] Numbers are ontological entities that, because of their nature, are indispensable in cognition. Because "nothing could be known if everything were unlimited" (44B3), it may appear that something can be known if it is limited, whereby the number appears to be associated with the limited. However, it seems that number is associated more with harmony than with the limited.[33] Things that are known are fitted together by harmony out of the unlimiteds and limiters. They are ordered, harmonious entities, and this orderliness is accessible to cognition through its manifestation which is numerical proportions; each thing "gives signs" of numbers (44B5). Limitedness enables proportionality, and numbers are its cognitive equivalents. The limited aspect of reality can be grasped through numbers, which are cognitive reflections of harmony. Unlimitedness escapes cognition, or rather, human cognition. It takes an infinite and thus divine mind to tackle infinity. The eternal being and nature of things "admit of divine and not human knowledge" (44B2): the eternal being – we may surmise – because of temporal infinity, and nature because of its undeterminedness; when determined, that is, when limited by *harmonia*, nature becomes accessible, as the cosmos, to human knowledge as well. Numbers are epistemologico-ontological entities.[34] They enable cognition because they are part of the cosmos, because things are modeled on them, at least in a sense that things in it are structures made out of proper proportions of the limiters and unlimiteds.[35]

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[31] Huffman, *Philolaus of Croton*, p. 61.

[32] As expressed in overly lofty terms, already for Pythagoras, "numbers are not mathematical concepts anymore, but purely speculative [concepts], images of essences, hieroglyphs for god-concepts and their attributes that have only accidental relation to particular numbers," Eduard Baltzer, *Pythagoras: der Weise aus Samos* (Nordhausen: Förstemann, 1868; reprinted Walluf: Sändig, 1973), p. 154.

[33] It was suggested that the etymological connection between words ἀριθμός and ἁρμονία may have facilitated the emergence of the number-philosophy, Alister Cameron, *The Pythagorean Background of the Theory of Recollection* (Menasha: George Banta, 1938), p. 26.

[34] Bauer, *Der ältere Pythagoreismus*, p. 203, note 1, recognizes the fact that Philolaus' teaching about number is not purely epistemological, but it is debatable whether – as Bauer states – they constitute a "fermenting transition stage from dualism and monism."

[35] "Having numbers" in B5 means "having structure that can be described mathematically," Huffman, *Philolaus of Croton*, p. 71.

Philolaus, however, says practically nothing about the connection between his three principles – limiters, unlimiteds, and *harmonia* – and numbers.

In a short cosmogonic statement, Philolaus says that "the first thing fitted together (harmonized), the one in the center of the sphere, is called the hearth" (44B7). We can see in it an expression of a conviction that the first act in the creation of the cosmos was a creation of the one, an act of *harmonia* which used limiters and unlimiteds to that end. If we also agree with the statement that the one is the source of numbers, then numbers are ontological entities. To create the one, and consequently numbers, *harmonia* may have used super-numerical principles that constitute its nature. But later, what is, is made out of numbers in the sense that numbers are harmonious combinations of limiters and unlimiteds. The role of *harmonia* is not ended because numbers that are embedded in the limiters-unlimiteds combinations are insufficient; their configurations or structures are affected directly by *harmonia.* For example, number 28 can be considered a material that consists of properly proportioned stuffs, say, 7 parts of limiter$_1$, 3 parts of limiter$_{21}$, and 18 parts of unlimited$_{23}$ (but also 6 parts of limiter$_1$, 10 parts of unlimited$_7$, 8 parts of unlimited$_{23}$, and 4 parts of unlimited$_{29}$, and so on), and a particular object would be an offshoot of number 28, that is, a properly molded structure made from the number-material 28.[36] This lends credibility to the view that the teaching about oppositions was first, and it was followed by the teaching of numbers.[37]

The creation of the one out of the limiters and unlimiteds marks the beginning of creation, the beginning of fitting together the world.[38] At that moment, as the Pythagoreans say, that is, "when the one had been formed – whether from planes or surfaces or sperm or from principles even they themselves cannot account for – instantly the nearest parts of the infinite were drawn in [as a breath] and defined by the definite" (*Met.* 1091a15–18 = 58B26). We do not know whether Philolaus himself endorsed this view, but it is not inconsistent with what he stated. The one comes from the principles that are simply assumed to exist, and in that sense they are unaccounted for.

Other details are not inconsistent with the image delineated so far. Pythagoras says, according to Aristotle, that "the heaven is one and from the unlimited are brought in [into heaven] time, breath, and the void that always separates the spaces of all [things]" (Stobaeus 1.18.1c = 58B30). And again, "the Pythagoreans also said that there was a void and that it enters heaven from the unbounded breath,[39] [heaven] also inhaling this void which separates (διορίζει) the natures [of things], the void being some kind of division and separation (διορίσις) of things [that come] one after another. This holds first in the numbers, for the void separates their nature" (*Phys.* 213b22–27 = 58B30). Because διορίζει means "keeps the units apart from

[36] Empedocles posits a somewhat similar theory by requiring that all things are mixtures of the four roots (elements) in proportions based on number eight. Cf. Aristotle's interpretation: "the substance of flesh or bone is number only in this way, 'three parts of fire and two of earth'" (*Met.* 1092b17–19).

[37] Bauer, *Der ältere Pythagoreismus*, p. 205.

[38] Cf. Philip, *Pythagoras and Early Pythagoreanism*, pp. 50–51, 61, 66–68.

[39] Retaining πνεύματος instead of the emendation πενῦμά (Diels) or πνεῦμα (Heidel).

each other"[40] and the void is "a boundary between things," the void is a principle of discontinuity by which "the well-delimited individuality of things" was ensured.[41] The created one does not incorporate all the limiters and unlimiteds. The one is a fulcrum of the cosmos and its core, the central place around which the cosmos is spun. It becomes larger and more elaborate by including the unlimiteds and fusing them with limiters. In this process, unlimited void fills the space between things and this filling function endows it with a positive, limiting aspect: an unlimited plays the role of a limiter due to the presence of limiters or limited things.

Is this also the view of Pythagoras himself? This is not impossible. As reported by Alexander Polyhistor, "the beginning of all things is the monad (ἀρχὴν τῶν ἁπάντων μονάδα). From the monad there arises the indeterminate dyad which then serves as passive material to the monad, while the monad serves as active cause. From the monad and indeterminate dyad there arise numbers; from numbers, points; from points, lines; from lines, plane figures; from plane figures, solid figures; from solid figures, perceivable bodies compounded of the four elements, fire, water, earth, air" (DL 8.25 = 58B1a).[42] We read that the monad gave rise to numbers and the numbers gave rise to geometric entities, and they were used to shape the four elements into things. But what about the four elements? They may be assumed to pre-exist as unlimiteds. The monad, or the one,[43] is the *arche* of all things, but not in the absolute sense. The monad itself is woven out of unlimiteds and limiters. It leads to the creation of numbers and thus the presence of numbers and numerical proportions can be found in all things in the cosmos. Without numbers, the cosmos would not exist, numbers would not exist without the monad, and so it can be called the *arche*. It is the *arche*, the first beginning of the organized, structured nature: the cosmos. In this sense, "numbers and proportions (symmetries) in them" are also called *archai* and harmonies by Pythagoras. The monad is "among the principles" (Aetius 1.3.8 = 58B15). That is, the monad is not an absolute *arche*, but only as much a principle as it is the beginning of numbers and

[40] Burnet, *Early Greek Philosophy*, p. 108.

[41] Theo G. Sinnige, *Matter and Infinity in the Presocratic Schools and Plato* (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1968), p. 60.

[42] It is frequently assumed that the excerpt of a Pythagorean memoir (DL 8.24–33 = 58B1a) is really late and dated to the end of the third century BC (Burkert, *Lore and Science in Ancient Pythagoreanism*, p. 53; Kahn, *Pythagoras and the Pythagoreans*, p. 75, 79–83; cf. Bruno Centrone, 'L'VIII libro delle "Vite" di Diogene Laerzio', in W. Haase (ed.), *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt*, (Berlin, 1992), Band II.36.6, p. 4197), but a strong case can be made that "the Pythagorean character of most of the doctrines that are presented there" is irrefutable, Armand Delatte, *La Vie de Pythagore de Diogène Laërce* (Brussels: Lamertin, 1922; reprinted New York: Arno Press, 1979]), p. 198; cf. Marcel Detienne, Xénocrate et demonologie pythagoricienne, *Revue des Études Anciennes* 60 (1958), pp. 274–275; Christoph Riedweg, *Pythagoras* (Munich: Beck, 2002), p. 39. I assume that the memoir for the most part reflects a genuine Pythagorean doctrine, frequently rendered in non-Pythagorean terminology.

[43] The identification of the one and the monad is explicitly made by Archytas and Philolaus, according to Theon of Smyrna 20.19 (= 44A10 = 47A20). Only later Platonists contrasted the one with the monad, and this distinction was frequently ascribed to the Pythagoreans as well.

organization of the world. However, this does not mean that the prerequisites for the monad are ruled out, namely limiters, unlimiteds, and *harmonia*.[44]

Soul

The idea of immortality of the soul and its transmigration belongs to the core ideas of Pythagoreanism from its very inception.[45] The problem is whether this view is generally held by the Pythagoreans, and in particular by Philolaus.

Four principles define a rational animal, according to Philolaus: brain, heart, navel, and genitals.

> The head [is the principle] of intellect, the heart of soul and sensation, the navel of rooting and first growth, the genitals of depositing of seed and generation. The brain [is] the principle of man, the heart that of animal, the navel that of plant, the genitals that of all together, for all things flourish and grow from seed. (*Theol. arith*. 25.17–26.3 = 44B13)[46]

The seed appears to be a package that incorporates the unlimiteds, the limiters, and the *harmonia*. Each living being's growth and development is incorporated *in nuce* in the seed. On the other hand, Pythagoras and Philolaus are said to espouse the view that the soul is harmony.[47] This is said to be in conflict with Philolaus' view of the four principles of the living being in which the soul is consigned to one part of the body and is apparently limited to the animal life only.[48] But the fact that the soul-*harmonia* is in the heart does not necessarily limit its harmonizing impact onto the whole of body. The fact that the soul is located in the pineal gland was no obstacle for Descartes to see it as the living and rational principle of man. Animal body requires harmonizing as much as human body, and it would be very natural for a Pythagorean to see the soul as the center of such harmonizing activity. The problem is with other entities: plants and inanimate beings. But this can be resolved thus: There is no need

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[44] Incidentally, a Philolaic fragment considered spurious may be authentic after all. Philolaus says that the "one is the beginning of all things" (ἓν ἀρχὰ πάντων, Iamblichus, *In Nic.* 77.8 = 44B8), not an absolute beginning, but the beginning in the world that is being organized, fitted together by *harmonia* from the pre-existing limiters and unlimiteds. Burkert, *Lore and Science in Ancient Pythagoreanism*, p. 257 note 90, briefly remarks that "ἓν ἀρχὰ πάντων … can be interpreted as referring to the πρᾶτον ἁρμοσθέν (fr. 7)."

[45] Dicaearchus *ap.* Porphyry, *VP* 19 = 14.8a; Claudianus Mamertus, *De statu animae* 2.7 = 44B22; *Carm. aur.* 5.70; Ion of Chios 36B4; Herodotus 4.95 = 14.2; Xenophanes 21B7; Aristotle, *De anima* 407b22–23 = 58B39.

[46] The Philolaic triad νοῦς–ψυχή–αἴσθησις corresponds to the triad φρένες–νοῦς–θυμός which, according to Alexander Polyhistor, originated with Pythagoras who also says that the soul spreads between the brain and the heart (DL 8.30 = 58B1a). Cf. Delatte, *La Vie de Pythagore de Diogène Laërce*, pp. 222–223; Burkert, *Lore and Science in Ancient Pythagoreanism*, pp. 74–75.

[47] Macrobius, *Somn. Sc.* 1.14.19 = 44A23. The view is ascribed to the Pythagoreans by Plotinus 4.7.8.4 and Philoponus, *In De anima* 70.5–7. However, see also H.B. Gottschalk, 'Soul as *harmonia*', *Phronesis* 16 (1971), pp. 192–193.

[48] Huffman, *Philolaus of Croton*, p. 308.

to ascribe a soul to a house to see harmony and organization in it. The harmony comes from the outside, from the builders. Similarly, plants and inanimate objects can be seen as harmonized from the outside, as well. By whom? This is a question that Philolaus does not address in the fragments considered genuine. We may venture to guess that there is a cosmic *harmonia* that plays that role. It is interesting that *harmonia* is mentioned by him in singular, whereas limiters and unlimiteds only in plural. It may indicate that *harmonia* plays the role of the world-soul that is an organizing principle of the universe.[49] The individual *harmoniai* to be found in the hearts of animals and humans would be just individualized offshoots of the cosmic *harmonia*, much as they are later in the Stoics.

If a soul is the *harmonia* of a body, how can it be a *harmonia* of another body as required by the Pythagorean doctrine of the transmigration of the soul? It is said that "this soul belongs to this body, was for it predestined and can never make harmony of another body, different from that one." So it is harmony of the body only for the newborns and for the souls that enter a body for the first time. Thus, at least in the case of some newborns, new souls have to be created that are clean.[50] This view, however, sees soul as fitting into an existing configuration of limiters and unlimiteds forming a particular body. But the soul is a harmonizing principle, it makes the body what it is; therefore, a particular soul can fare as well or as badly in one life as it did and will do in another life. Soul is somehow embedded in a seed and then flourishes – or, rather, it makes a body flourish after the seed germinates. In fact, the germination process is probably also the doing of the soul that is in the seed. The role of the world *harmonia* would be limited to making a seed germinate in a particular time and place. Therefore, there does not appear to be any contradiction between the view of the immortality of the soul and its transmigration.

Philolaus explicitly distinguishes three principles: unlimiteds, limiters, and *harmonia*. They can exist independently from one another, which may pose an epistemological problem, but not an ontological one. Things can be just limiters or unlimiteds, and *harmonia*'s independent status is marked by the phrase, "in whatever way it does" (B6). Only when *harmonia* is seen as synthesis of opposing elements, it cannot precede them nor succeed them, just as *harmonia* cannot exist without the lyre, as argued by Plato in the *Phaedo*. *Harmonia* in general, and the soul in particular, is not an entity existing due to the conjunction of the other two principles as their structure, as it were, but exists independently. Whether it is an immaterial principle is, well, immaterial. The Pythagoreans did not raise this problem. It is as material or immaterial as unlimiteds and limiters and coexisting with them. Therefore, Plato's argument does not demolish the soul's immortality, notwithstanding the embarrassment of a Pythagorean Echecrates with whom Socrates argues.[51]

Can transmigration ever end? An *acusma* states: "What are the Isles of the Blest? The sun and the moon" (Iamblichus, *VP* 82 = 58C4). It is thus possible that

[49] Cicero, *ND* 1.27; Chaignet, *Pythagore et la philosophie pythagoricienne*, pp. 176, 180–181. Moreover, the world soul can be identified with God, Boeckh, *Philolaos*, p. 151.

[50] Bauer, *Der ältere Pythagoreismus*, pp. 165, 167, 171.

[51] Cf. Cameron, *The Pythagorean Background of the Theory of Recollection*, pp. 45, 50.

the transmigration process has its end. And, in fact, the intricate body of various everyday-life precepts would indicate that such a prospect exists.

Because "pleasures are in every way evil" (Iamblichus, *VP* 85 = 58C4) and "no other experience has more power to trip us up and land us in error" (204), one should always fight pleasures by not attempting to fulfill our desires, except natural desires (defined as movements of the soul, 205) and only to an indispensable extent, such as desire to eat by not eating too much. A general precept is self-control. In the speech to the youths of Croton, Pythagoras recommends temperance (self-control, σωφροσύνη) arguing that the lack of self-control brought down Troy (41–42). Self-control is self-limitation, and limit is good. Luxury (indulgence) and arrogance bring destruction to the house and to the state (171).

It is difficult to imagine that even the members of the *mathematici* group would be sufficiently motivated to follow these precepts if they did not believe that the cycle of transmigration can be broken. Otherwise, why follow any teaching, why be a vegetarian and lead almost an ascetic life?

What is this final stage of the soul which is released from the reincarnation cycle? We can only guess an answer. And the answer is: harmony. It is quite likely that "the soul is not sooner released from the body until it achieves a complete mastery of the desires of the body, i.e., until the will of man is fully free and enabled to truly moral activity."[52] By mastering desires and appetites, the harmony of the soul–body union is brought to completion, harmony is established in earthly life, and thus the soul can continue to live in the harmonious way in the afterlife, in "the sun and the moon," immersed in the cosmic harmony, listening to the everlasting music of the Sirens.[53] But being itself harmonious in this celestial abode, the soul contributes to the cosmic harmony, although it is an overstatement that "in Pythagoreanism, the final end sought is not so much personal salvation as the harmony of the cosmos."[54] The final state is as much about personal well-being as about cosmic harmony. But the former is accomplished by subordination to the latter, to moral rules which are of the divine origin.

God-*harmonia*

Pythagoras' statements are saturated with religion, with the constant awareness of the presence of the divine, and with a necessity to maintain best connection with it, whether through sacrifices, oracles, music, or scientific research.

The view of the highest divinity is summarized in two *acusmata*: "What is the wisest? Number …What is most beautiful? Harmony" (Iamblichus, *VP* 82 = 58C4). How can numbers be wise? For a Greek, the wisest are the gods, therefore, number would signify divine knowledge, knowledge expressed in terms of numbers,

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[52] Bauer, *Der ältere Pythagoreismus*, pp. 175.

[53] Cf. Burkert, *Lore and Science in Ancient Pythagoreanism*, p. 364.

[54] Edwin L. Minar, *Early Pythagorean Politics in Practice and Theory* (Baltimore: Waverly Press, 1942), pp. 128–129.

knowledge expressed by numerical relations.[55] Also, God is to be followed in everything. But only what is best, both in an ethical and aesthetic sense, and what is most beautiful is worth pursuing, and the beauty is best expressed in order, in good arrangement of all things, in harmony. Therefore, harmony is a divine prerogative, a divine mark which manifests itself through numbers. According to the aphorism Pythagoras is said to have repeated most often, "all things resemble numbers (ἀριθμῷ πάντ' ἐπέοικεν)" (162). Detecting numbers and numerical proportions in nature is detecting God's presence. Everything resembles numbers because everything was fitted together by God, who used the divine law of harmony to that end. This lofty view of harmony was accompanied by a keen interest in science, science conducted not for science's sake, but to find the presence of God in nature.

Philolaus is very restrained in theological questions. He limits himself primarily to metaphysical and cosmogonic problems without any attempt to find in them a theological significance. Philolaus is reported to have said that "all things are encompassed by God as if in prison" (Athenagoras, *Legatio pro Chr.* 6 = 44B15).[56] God should probably not be understood as physically encompassing all things, because outside the cosmos there is the realm of the unlimiteds, unless "all things" are the things in the cosmos. More important here is the image of God-*harmonia* who is in control of all things, where "all things" can be understood in an unqualified manner. Due to the action of God-*harmonia*, the limiters and the unlimiteds are fitted together into the cosmos. If the reference to a prison is also Philolaus', the prison can be taken to mean the set of laws which are imposed onto the limiters and the unlimiteds, the laws which make the world harmonious.

One testimony also reports that Philolaus locates "the *hegemonikon* in the central fire, which the demiurgic God set down under the sphere of the whole like a keel" (Aetius 2.4.15 = A17). The authenticity of the fragment is questioned because the use of the Stoic *hegemonikon* and the Platonic "demiurgic God." But *hegemonikon* "is probably derived from the rubric heading in the doxographers,"[57] and although the phrase "demiurgic God" may be in doubt, the reference to God should not be doubted.[58] The existence of God is stated here explicitly. God, to be sure, is active in the cosmogonic process beginning with the center of the world (B7).

We cannot turn to Aristotle in order to find more about Philolaus' theology.[59] Aristotle discusses at some length Pythagorean views, in which he is supposed to

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[55] And thus number can be understood in the *acusma* as the key to the world, Riedweg, *Pythagoras*, p. 104.

[56] Huffman, *Philolaus of Croton*, p. 407, provides very unconvincing arguments for the inauthenticity of this saying.

[57] Huffman, *Philolaus of Croton*, p. 400; Burkert, *Lore and Science in Ancient Pythagoreanism*, p. 246 note 38.

[58] It is primarily because of this reference that the fragment is discarded by Huffman, *Philolaus of Croton*, p. 401; however, see Boeckh, *Philolaos*, p. 97.

[59] There is one passage quoted by both Lydus, *De mensibus* 2.12 and Philo, *De opificio mundi* 100 (= B20): "there is a ruler and leader of all, one God, eternal, constant, unmoved, similar to himself, [different from other things – this ending is only in Philo]." The fragment is considered doubtful by Diels-Kranz and also by Bauer, *Der ältere Pythagoreismus*, p. 29, and rejected by Burkert, *Lore and Science in Ancient Pythagoreanism*, p. 249, and Huffman,

have relied on Philolaus' writings, but often in an unsympathetic, not to say, mocking, manner. No theological issues are raised, either. However, this is to be expected in a philosopher to whom theological problems are only of tangential interest. Therefore, it is hard to expect that Aristotle would be sensitive to the theological pronouncements of the Pythagoreans. Moreover, it is possible that in his discussion of Pythagoreanism, "Aristotle is not directing his arguments against any one person or school, but rather against the whole character and trend of thought at Athens in his day – against the mathematization of philosophy,"[60] so that no references to theological issues needed to be made.

What is the connection between God and the three principles? That is, what is the connection between Pythagoras' religion and Philolaus' metaphysics? No explicit answer can be found anywhere, and only a tentative answer can be ventured.

For Pythagoras, God is the source of harmony and order, and God shaped the world out of infinite substance. Having listened to Anaximander, Pythagoras would have no problem with the assumption that such substance exists. Is this substance – considered divine by Anaximander – itself the source of the cosmos? Pythagoras, with his insistence on the role of harmony, may have separated God from the infinite substance, making God the seat of *harmonia*. He may have introduced the limiters, as well. It is a pure speculation whether he saw the limiter(s) and unlimited(s) as coeternal with God or as generated by God. For Philolaus, limiters and unlimiteds are uncreated. Also, eternal *harmonia* is fitting them together. In view of his references to God as an active principle, it is possible that for Philolaus *harmonia* is simply God, or at least an attribute of God. The *harmonia* aspect in the divine is what is Pythagorean in the two great Pythagoreans.

As Aristotle states, according to the Pythagoreans, "the whole universe is a *harmonia* and number" (*Met.* 986a2–3). If *harmonia* is God, then the statement can be interpreted as an expression of pantheism.[61] It seems, however, that the statement simply means that the universe is harmonious, and thus the cosmos. It is the cosmos as the work of *harmonia*, but does not – and should not – have to be identified with *harmonia* itself. *Harmonia* brings the cosmos into existence from pre-existing limiters and unlimiteds and is present itself in the world because the world is structured and proportional. To a large extent, the work of *harmonia* is continued

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Philolaus of Croton, pp. 337–339. The primary reason is that Lydus attributes it to ὀνήτωρ (or ὁ νήτωρ) that is corrected to ὁ ῥήτωρ, a (Tarentine) rhetor, which fits Philolaus – mentioned earlier by Lydus (1.15) – who was from Tarentum, but his being rhetor is considered doubtful. Another proposal is to read ὀνήτωρ as a name, Onetor, strange name as it is, and then state that Philo misattributes the quotation taken from the same source as Lydus. The arguments are very tenuous and unconvincing. The main argument against this quotation appears to be that it is a "seemingly monotheistic saying" (Burkert) and that Philolaus was unable "to construct his metaphysical *Urprinzip* to such a strong theological setting" (Bauer). However, the fragment is considered authentic by Chaignet, *Pythagore et la philosophie pythagoricienne*, p. 54 and Karl Reinhardt, *Parmenides* (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1959), p. 248 note 2.

[60] Philip, *Pythagoras and Early Pythagoreanism*, p. 86.

[61] "It can hardly be doubted that the Pythagorean system was a pantheism," according to Crawford, 'The Pythagorean philosophy of number', p. 185; similarly, Chaignet, *Pythagore et la philosophie pythagoricienne*, p. 16.

by numbers as already properly proportioned limiters and unlimiteds, but *harmonia* does not withdraw like Plato's Demiurge who leaves the continuation of the work on the world to the gods.

Pythagorean theology is hardly pantheistic. "All things are arranged according to harmony," says Pythagoras, because, we may add, all things are arranged by *harmonia*. And by giving signs of numbers, things give signs of *harmonia*; their orderliness is a manifestation of the *harmonia* that stands behind their existence. By pointing to *harmonia*, things can, in a sense, be identified with it because they stem from it, and thus, we read that "virtue is harmony and so are health and all good things and God himself" (DL 8.33 = 58B1a). All good things are expressions of *harmonia*, but *harmonia* itself can be found in God because God is its source, God is *harmonia*.[62]

Anaximander constructed the concept of deity by retaining in it what is essential. God is immortal, and thus infinite, at least in the temporal aspect, which is summarized in the name of the first principle, the *Apeiron*. God is also uncreated because he is the source of the universe. The universe is not created *ex nihilo*, but separated from the substance of God.[63] Moreover, God is the source of the moral law. Pythagoreans rectified the concept of divinity even further. God is not infinite and, although not the source of infinity, he is independent of it. God is neither infinite nor finite, God surpasses the limitations of the two: God is beyond the finite and the infinite. This was motivated by a negavite view of infinity. Could God be infinite if infinity was evil? The negative view of infinity is, in turn, motivated by the prominence of the number and numerical proportions. Therefore, for Pythagoreans it was more important that God is the source of harmony than that he is – or is not – infinite. Divinity is the ultimate source of harmony and orderliness in the universe.

The view that harmony manifests itself best through numbers leads to a generalization that harmony is numerical harmony and numerical proportions. In particular, moral laws are also numerical laws, and ethics is only a branch of mathematics. Anaximender's *Apeiron* is in charge of the universe by steering its events and presumably the *Apeiron* does it in orderly fashion. But Anaximander himself does not bring this element of orderliness to the fore. The Pythagoreans make harmony the centerpiece of divinity, thereby reshaping the concept of divinity. Anaximander's God-*Apeiron* is an infinite creator and the source of morality. The Pythagorean God is a harmonious creator, harmony itself. God-*harmonia* becomes, then, the author of numbers, which is a material shaped by numerical proportions, and of ethics, which are also numerical laws.

From the two attributes that Anaximander ascribes to God – infinity and the source of moral law – the Pythagoreans retain the second. God is a source of moral law. But this is a subsidiary attribute to God's being the source of harmony and order.

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[62] Lucian's Pythagoras says that "God is number and mind and *harmonia*," *Vitarum auctio* 4.

[63] It is thus only one step to the claim that the *Apeiron* "cannot signify anything else but the contrary of *peras* capable of containing some unlimited diversity of numbers – all [being] limited things, whereas the *apeiron* itself is without limit from the standpoint of the diversity of the numbers contained [in it]," Bohdan Wiśniewski, ''Apeiron' d'Anaximandre et de Pythagore', *Studi italiani di filologia classica* 31 (1959), pp. 177–178.

The existence of moral law is just one way that harmony is expressed. In Western thought, the Pythagoreans are the first to vocalize "the almost universal conviction that reality is ordered … It is a divine Reality, say most of the human traditions."[64]

The emphasis put on *harmonia* is a lasting contribution of Pythagoreanism. Later, the proof of the existence of God from design is going to become one of the strongest proofs. In fact, it is the first proof that was used in Western philosophy. It was first used by Socrates and then by the Stoics. Also, the Pythagorean concept of God who surpasses the infinite is later expressed by Augustine and most prominently by the founder of set theory, Georg Cantor.[65] This view is carried even further by elevating God above being, which is the view made already by Plato in a passing remark (*Rep.* 509b), then by Speusippus and most prominently by Plotinus.

[64] Raimundo Panikkar, The invisible harmony: a universal theory of religion or a cosmic confidence in reality, in Leonard Swidler (ed.), *Toward a Universal Theology of Religion* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1987), p. 144.

[65] Adam Drozdek, 'Beyond infinity: Augustine and Cantor', *Laval théologique et philosophique* 51 (1995), no. 1, pp. 127–140.

Chapter 6

Empedocles and the Holy *Phren*

Elements and forces

According to Empedocles, the universe is an evolving system made out of four eternal and imperishable roots or elements – air, fire, water, and earth – that are molded by two conflicting and equally eternal and undying forces, love and strife. The evolution is a recurrent development from the phase of total dominion of strife, resulting in total separation of the elements, to the total dominion of love, resulting in a perfect mixture of the elements in the cosmic sphere, and then back to the total dominion of strife. The intermediate phases in the evolving universe are the result of the interplay between love and strife. When the universe evolves from the one to the many, the world as we know it results, but this world has a tendency to disintegrate. Organisms that are at first well-fitted together from separate parts are broken into separate parts that may unite into monstrous combinations. But eventually, because of the weakness of the force of love, the parts cannot be combined into anything and are themselves broken down to the level of the four elemental components. On the other hand, when the universe evolves from the many to the one, at first, separate parts are composed under the guidance of love and then these parts are put together into disharmonious wholes. These monstrous combinations are not lasting, and then harmonious organisms emerge from, this time, well-organized combinations of parts. However, when love gains in strength, these organisms are destroyed so that the elemental materials constituting them can be homogeneously mixed together to form the sphere.[1]

In this universe, love and strife have no moral connotations. They are cosmic forces. Love is a force that aims at uniting elements, strife at separating them. However, love is just as destructive as strife, which was already observed by Aristotle who said that "in collecting things into the one it [love] destroys all other things" (*Met.* 1000b11–12). The result of the activity of love is a perfect union of the elements in the homogeneous sphere. This state is possible when love completely prevails, leaving strife on the outside of the sphere. At the opposite end of the world evolution, strife prevails, forcing love to the outside of the sphere. In that phase, the four elements are separated from each

[1] The traditional view of the cosmic cycle is reaffirmed in recently published new Empedoclean fragments, Alain Martin and Oliver Primavesi, *L'Empédocle de Strasbourg* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1999), pp. 179, 219–220. The view of the evolutionary sequence in the world of increasing strife repeated in the reverse order in the world of increasing love is found in Edwin L. Minar, 'Cosmic periods in the philosophy of Empedocles', *Phronesis* 8 (1963), pp. 140–145, and Denis O'Brien, *Empedocles' Cosmic Cycle* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969), p. 199. O'Brien, however, assumes that in the latter world people are eventually "assumed into the blissful Sphere," p. 3. It seems that only the material substrate into which people are dissolved is assumed there.

other into concentric spheres with heavy elements at the center and the light elements above them. Total rule of love has, thus, very unlovable consequences for the world as we know it; the world is destroyed and mixed thoroughly so that all that is in this world turns into the elements. It is true, then, that in the Empedoclean world "without strife, we would perish because of too much love."[2]

It is interesting that, from the perspective of today's physics, the universe under the total reign of strife is more ordered than under the dominion of love because the entropy – and thus disorder – is greater in the latter than in the former. Nevertheless, some researchers came to the view that the world of strife is total chaos.[3] But Empedocles would use different criteria. To him it was obvious that keeping fire and water separate is easy and natural, but keeping them mixed so that water does not extinguish fire is so challenging that it requires a special force, love, to enable such a mixture.

Harmony

The interplay between love and strife is kept in check by harmony. Harmonia is a daughter of Ares and Aphrodite (*Th.* 937, 975; *Homeric Hymn to Apollo* 195), that is, a daughter of the god of war or strife, and the goddess of love. In Empedocles' system, harmony should not be identified with love, as is so often assumed,[4] nor is harmony simply a progeny or product of love[5] or of strife; harmony is an intermediary that reconciles the claims, so to speak, of love and strife. Thanks to harmony, the world can develop in an orderly manner, life can emerge, organisms can be formed. Harmony uses both strife and love to mold the world. It harnesses the power of the two conflicting forces to bring harmonious entities into existence. It can do, however, only that much. If love becomes too strong, or, for that matter, strife overpowers the force of love, harmony cannot operate as efficiently – and harmoniously – as in the stages of world development when the two forces are more or less equal. But whatever the stage is, harmony looks for the best arrangement of the elemental materials through the forces of love and strife to arrange the things

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[2] Jean Bollack, *Empédocle* (Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit, 1965), vol. 3, p. 128.

[3] "Incoherent chaos," Léon Robin, *La Pensée grecque et les origines de l'esprit scientifique* (Paris: Renaissance du Livre, 1923), p. 127 and N.I. Boussoulas, 'Essai sur la structure du Mélange dans la pensée présocratique. Empédocle', *Revue de Métaphysique et de Morale* 63 (1958), pp. 140–141; "chaotic magma," Abel Rey, *La maturité de la pensée scientifique en Gréce* (Paris: Michel, 1939), pp. 106, 108.

[4] Such an identification has been made at least since Plutarch, *De Is. et Os.* 370d = B18 and Simplicius' comment on B96.4 and followed by M.R. Wright, *Empedocles: the extant fragments* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981), pp. 188, 210; O'Brien, *Empedocles' Cosmic Cycle*, p. 336 note 1; Bollack, *Empédocle*, vol. 3, pp. 134–135, 388. It is also made by Eduard Baltzer, *Empedocles. Eine Studie zur Philosophie der Griechen* (Leipzig: Eigendorf, 1879), p. 98, 100; Minar, 'Cosmic periods in the philosophy of Empedocles', pp. 131–132; Charles H. Kahn, 'Religion and natural philosophy in Empedocles' doctrine of the soul', *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie* 42 (1960), pp. 22, 24; Johann C. Lüth, *Die Struktur des Wirklichen im empedokleischen System "Über die Natur"* (Meisenheim: Hain, 1970), pp. 32, 34, 91.

[5] As assumed by Nicolaus van der Ben, *The Proem of Empedocles' Peri physios* (Amsterdam: Grüner, 1975), pp. 160–161.

of the world, to form the cosmos. The law of harmony assures that the incessant movement of the world from the prevalence of love to the prevalence of strife and then back to the complete rule of love is regular. There is no stage in which love rules only halfway and then its power is suppressed by the power of strife. This is a cyclical movement, ordered, and regular through the coordination of the exchange of power between love and strife under the rule of the law of harmony.

In his insistence on the presence of harmony, Empedocles is a Pythagorean. This is best seen in the particular way harmony manifests itself in the world, namely as a law of proportions.

In B96, Empedocles determines the makeup of bones; a bone is made out of four parts of fire (Hephaistos), two parts of earth, and two parts of gleaming Nestis, the latter two parts being two parts of water (Aetius 5.22.1 = A78), or one part air and one part water, because he calls both air and water gleaming and Nestis, according to Simplicius (*In De anima* 68.2-14 = B96). Whether the proportion is 4 fire : 2 earth : 2 water or 4 fire : 2 earth : 1 air : 1 water, this fragment indicates that for Empedocles, the nature of different materials encountered in the world was determined by the proportion of the four constitutive elements, in which the proportion was based on the number eight.[6] That is, the numbers in the proportion expressing the contribution of the four elements in a particular material – fire : earth : air : water – add up to eight: fire + earth + air + water = 8, and the numbers in the proportion can only be integers between 0 and 8.[7] For example, possible proportions are 1 : 2 : 3 : 2, 0 : 4 : 4 : 0, 3 : 1 : 3 : 1, and so on. Empedocles himself gives another example, blood, which is composed of the four elements in almost exact proportion 1 : 1 : 1 : 1, or rather, 2 : 2 : 2 : 2 (Simplicius, *In Phys.* 32.6–10 = B98) – the same proportion of the four elements that are "all equal" (Simplicius, *In Phys.* 158.26 = B17.27) and "mixed in the sphere which is found most perfectly in the blood."[8] For this reason blood is the organ of thinking (Theophrastus, *De sensu* 10 = A86).

Although there are in total 165 such possible combinations of proportions based on the number eight, this does not mean that there are only 165 different possible materials, four of them being elemental, the rest being compound. Not only bones, but also flesh is approximately in proportion of 1 : 1 : 1 : 1 (A78).[9] Also, sinew is "fire and

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[6] "The eighths are established here [in B96] as the basis (*Exponent*) of relation," Bernhard H. C. Lommatzsch, *Die Weisheit des Empedocles* (Berlin: Reimer, 1830), p. 189. The use of the number eight is clearly a Pythagorean element of Empedocles' philosophy. Pythagoras, by means of a single vibrating string called a monochord, discovered the ratios of frequencies that make up the musical scale since the harmonious octave reached over eight notes. Also, for the Pythagoreans generally (Proclus, *In Tim*. 2.270.5) and for Philolaus in particular (*Theologumena arithmeticae* 74.10 = 44A12), eight signifies love, friendship, wisdom, and thought, and to Pythagoras is attributed the view that friendship is harmony (DL 8.33 = 58B1a). For Empedocles, then, the harmony of the cosmos is reflected in the number eight used in determining proportions of constitutive elements in the things of nature.

[7] "There is no reason to suppose that all four [elements] are constituents of everything," Wright, *Empedocles*, p. 209.

[8] Bollack, *Empédocle*, vol. 3, p. 382.

[9] Aetius says, "in exact proportion," which is probably too strongly phrased and it should be taken to mean, "in almost exact proportion," cf. Harald A.T. Reiche, *Empedocles' Mixture,*

earth with double amount of water" – that is, 2 fire : 2 earth : 4 water – and "claws are produced from sinews which are cooled off as they meet the air" (A78). That is, claws are cooled-off sinews. Cooling-off may be the cause of better – or worse – mixture so that the blending of the three elements of claws is different than in sinews. This may mean that the elements constituting, say, bones are there in correct proportions – otherwise bones would not be bones – but they are not mixed properly; that is, they are partially separated from one another. The distinctiveness of different materials is thus determined by both the particular proportion of elements and the extent to which the elements are mixed in the material. For this reason, Theophrastus can say that to Empedocles a particular skill is due to a moderate blend in an organ. Some are good speakers because they have such a blend in their tongues, some are good craftsmen because such a blend is in their hands. "Those in whom [the elements] are mixed equally … are most thoughtful and most accurate in their sense-perceptions" (Theophrastus, *De sensu* 11 = A86).

How is a particular mixture determined? Empedocles says that proportional parts of bone are "marvelously held together by the gluing of harmony" (B96.5). The acceptable ratios of elements that determine the makeup of what exists in the world are the laws of harmony, the harmony itself.[10] Harmony cannot be derived from the four elements; it cannot be derived from the two primeval forces.[11] Harmony is the component that, in a manner of speaking, glues these elements, the component that embodies what is best, durable, acceptable, desirable. Harmony uses to that end both love and strife. It is natural that love is glue because it unites different elements into one entity,[12] but strife also can be used as glue by "forming particular bodies by attracting the similar to the similar."[13]

The laws of harmony are thus divine laws. They are divine because they are eternal, because they are the laws to which love and strife are subsumed, and because they express the rationality of the world. However, they do not exist by themselves; they find their seat in the divine Mind, the divine *Phren*, and as such they are an attribute of God.[14]

Eudoxan astronomy and Aristotle's connate pneuma (Amsterdam: Hakkert, 1960), p. 54 note 1.

[10] This justifies the definition of harmony as "the formula of the compound," Gordon H. Clark, *Empedocles and Anaxagoras in Aristotle's De anima*, (Philadelphia, 1929), p. 19, or better yet, as a set of all formulas of all compounds.

[11] Jaeger is correct in stating that harmony "has the individual gods of the four elements and the gods of Love and Hate firmly in her control," Werner Jaeger, *The Theology of the Early Greek Philosophers* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1947), p. 236 note 52. Aphrodite does not invent the proportion, as claimed by Bollack, *Empédocle*, vol. 1, p. 79, but she obeys it.

[12] "Love, like glue, can make the elements stick together, and it is in this sense that it is the harmony," says Clark, *Empedocles and Anaxagoras in Aristotle's De anima*, p. 37.

[13] Yves Battistini, *Trois Présocratiques: Héraclite, Parménide, Empédocle* (Paris: Gallimard, 1988), p. 118.

[14] As phrased by Giorgio de Santillana, the *Phren* that is "some sort of archetypal intellect … is the fount from which Love draws the ratios and harmonies for its operations," *The Origins of Scientific Thought* (New York: A Mentor Book, 1961), p. 121.

Chance and necessity

The fact of existence of the laws of harmony is insufficient to insure that the laws can take effect. Harmony pertains to what is best and desirable, but what is best and desirable can only remain an idea that is never or only incidentally realized. If the events in the universe occur by chance only, then there is little chance that a harmonious whole can emerge, much less periodically, regularly, like in a clockwork.

Empedocles mentions randomly occurring events. This is particularly stressed by Simplicius who says that Empedocles "had some notion of things which happen by chance" and quotes seven brief fragments that use one of the three randomness words: συγκυρεῖν, τυγχάνειν, and τύχη (B53, B59.2, B98.1, B85, B75.2, B103, B104, in that order, *In Phys.* 330.31–331.176). In particular, Empedocles states that in the creation of the cosmos, air "chanced to be running in this way, but often otherwise" (B53); that is, sometimes upward, as it should, but sometimes downward, when "it sank with long roots into the earth" (Aristotle, *De gen. et corr.* 334a5 = B54). This was the result of the activity of the two conflicting forces, love and strife. This apparent disorder continues even after the cosmos is formed – "after the earth and sea appeared" as phrased by Tzetzes (*Exeg. in Iliad.* 42.17–26 = A66) – and a perfect order can only be if one of the forces prevails. In the meantime, that is, most of the time in the history of the universe, the conflict of the two forces makes an appearance of randomness, at least in the short run. "After the earth and sea appeared," they did not disintegrate immediately due to the random movements of elements, but the glue of harmony kept them together. In this, harmony works as a filter that retains these configurations of elements that are generated by the conflict of love and strife. These two forces are concerned primarily about getting an upper hand over each other. The things in the world that emerge as a result of the struggle of these two forces are just a side effect that becomes permanent over longer periods of time due to the activity of the selective nature of the laws of harmony, that is, due to the activity of God. This can best be seen in one fragment quoted by Simplicius: "by the will of chance all things have thought" (B103). The apparently random result of world evolution is that *all* things are endowed with a measure of rationality (and the ability to feel pleasure and pain, as stated in Theophrastus, *De sensu* 10 = B107). If randomness were the only principle of constructing things, then about a half of them should be devoid of any rational faculty if the glue of harmony is not used to make such an arrangement permanent (or semi-permanent). The will of chance would endow things with thought but it also would empty them of it, should they have any. The overseeing laws of harmony make it certain that the created arrangement is not randomly dissolved, but kept as long as the interplay of the two equally strong forces allows them to exist. This type of explanation is, in fact, offered by Simplicius himself. He says that different parts of animals came together to form an animal, but only those combinations of parts survived that "supplied each others' needs" and "as many as did not come together in their proper proportion (*logos*) perished" (*In Phys*. 371.33–372.8 = B61).

Empedocles also writes about necessity and its impact on the course of peregrinations in the world of defiled *daimones*: "There is an oracle of necessity, an ancient decree of the gods, eternal, sealed with broad oaths" which determines how the *daimones* would wander (Hippolytus, *Ref.* 7.29.23 = B115.1–2). This oracle is not limited to the determination of the ways of the *daimones*. Empedocles also says

that "when strife has grown great in his [god's] limbs and has sprung up to claim its rights as the dawning was being completed which has been defined for each in turn by a broad oath [then …]" (Simplicius, *In Phys.* 1184.14–16 = B30). The dominion of love is not interminable. There comes a time when love has to relinquish its power to strife which, in due time, will do the same for love. The interchangeability of these dominions is not done willingly by either of the two forces, but is accomplished under the supervision of necessity because necessity is, in the words of Hippolytus, "the change from one to many by strife and from many to one by love" (B115). The oracle of necessity is immutable, and this oracle determines a general course of events. The details may be open to determination by the behavior of love and strife in a particular part of the universe, which makes the appearance of randomly occurring events, but the general trend is prescribed. That is why the world develops cyclically, as also later for the Stoics, and that is why, unlike for at least some Stoics, all cycles are not identical. Understandably, Hippolytus considers it to be "the greatest law for the ordering of all things" (*Ref.* 7.29.23 = B115).

The world from eternity is made and remade out of the four primal elements due to the action of the two forces. The world and everything in it has some measure of reason and as such is able to set goals. These goals would be irreconcilable if there were no unifying instance. This unifying instance is God the *Phren*, the seat of rationality of the universe. This rationality manifests itself in the law of harmony and in necessity.

The *Phren*'s ideal is to be embedded in the sphere forever. This would, however, mean that strife should be forever suppressed if not annihilated. But Empedocles' world is not unlike a Manichean world: there are two equally powerful forces and one is unwilling to relinquish permanently its power to the opposite force. To avoid a chaotic situation, allowing each power to prevail in its turn is the second-best solution. In this way, the two powers may be satisfied with their claims to be a dominating power.[15] The law of necessity reconciles these claims and allows for the law of harmony to take effect. The world can be harmonious because there is a necessary trend in the way the world evolves. In this sense, necessity is the highest law.[16] As such a law, it was also called by Empedocles fate (αἶσα).[17]

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[15] "If the cosmic cycle is to continue in endless succession … and yet is to be dominated by two opposed forces, Love and Strife, there must be an equilibrium inherent in the structure of the cycle. This equilibrium is most obviously expressed in equal periods of rule of the two powers. This equality in its turn is in the fifth century naturally expressed in terms of necessity," O'Brien, *Empedocles' Cosmic Cycle*, p. 249.

[16] It is stated that for Empedocles necessity is the one principle that unites all natural principles, Lommatzsch, *Die Weisheit des Empedocles*, p. 70 ("necessity is the law according to which being is as it is, rules and forms as it happens, so again deforms and loosens, as it takes place, thus only this, which is so necessary, as it is, is absolute," p. 67) and overstated that "Empedocles seems to believe in an ineluctable, eternal decree of Fate or Necessity, in a supreme Law that is above the elements, above the forces, above the gods," Helle Lambridis, *Empedocles* (University, Ala.: The University of Alabama Press, 1976), p. 52.

[17] The four roots "in turn prevail as the cycle rolls and decrease into each other and increase in succession of fate" (Simplicius, *In Phys.* 33.19–20 = B26.1–2); this fate is "the universal law of being," in the words of William E. Leonard, notes in Empedocles, *The Fragments* (Chicago: The Open Court, 1908), p. 74.

God

God is, in Empedocles' words, an "all alone, holy and ineffable Mind (φρήν), by his swift thoughts rushing through the entire universe."[18] A *phren* is the rational faculty which requires a substrate to exist. Empedocles did not envision a *phren*, even the holy *Phren*, God, as an immaterial, standalone being.[19] But although requiring a material substrate, the *Phren* should not be identified with it. As such, the *Phren* cannot be grasped through unaided perception: "It is impossible to come near [the divine], within reach of our eyes, or to grasp him with the hands, although this is the main road of persuasion entering the minds of men" (Clement, *Strom.* 5.81.2 = B133). The divine cannot be grasped through senses but through reasoning, through the operation of the human *phren*.[20] This, by the way, indicates that, although he did not offer any epistemological theory in the extant fragments, Empedocles did not quite identify perception and thinking as claimed by Aristotle.[21]

A substrate has an impact on the way the *Phren* works: the more elements that participate in the mixture and the better mixed they are, the better are the workings of the *Phren*. Because the ideal mixture can only be found in the sphere, the sphere is called God (Simplicius, *In Phys*. 1184.2–4 = B31), even the most happy God (Aristotle, *Met.* 1000b3–4). The sphere is also called so because it is full of the *Phren*; God completely fills the sphere; the *Phren* is present in each part of the sphere. However, by itself, the sphere is not divine.[22] It is only the perfect material setting for the *Phren*. The sphere is divine because it is the best setting for the *Phren*, not because it is the perfect mixture. Only in this state can God, the holy *Phren*, be the most happy. Only in this state is God-*Phren* in the blissful solitude (Stobaeus 1.15.2 = B28). Also, it is the state in which God can be said to be "held fast in the close covering of harmony, a rounded sphere rejoicing in joyous stillness" (Simplicius, *In Phys*. 1183.32–1184.1 = B27.3–4). This is because harmony prevails completely when, in particular, all the four elements are perfectly mixed in the entire world so that the proportion 1 : 1 : 1 : 1 is present in the tiniest portion of the universe. Due to the harmonious constitution of the universe, God is the happiest God, God can truly enjoy this solitude. The laws of harmony truly prevail, and God is

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[18] Ammonius, *In De interp*. 249.9–10 = B134; the fragment is "an acknowledgment of an almost monotheistic concept of God," Hermann Diels, 'Über die Gedichte des Empedokles', *Sitzungsberichte der Preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften* 62 (1898), p. 405.

[19] Although Olympiodorus, *In Gorg.* 4.3, gives B134.1 as Empedocles' anticipation of Plato's denial that God is σωματικός, Wright, *Empedocles*, p. 253.

[20] And only in this sense we may agree that God can be grasped in a supersensory manner, as stated by Lommatzsch, *Die Weisheit des Empedocles*, p. 96.

[21] *De anima* 427a22–23 = B106. Aristotle quotes B106 and B108 as a proof, but these quotations seem to be remarkably unrelated to the problem of cognition. In this fragment, Aristotle is clearly misleading, as bluntly stated by Clara E. Millerd, *On the Interpretation of Empedocles* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1908; reprinted New York: Garland 1980), p. 81. In B17.21, Empedocles requires that one should look and love with the mind (*nous*) not with the eyes.

[22] Inwood also argues for the nonidentification of God and the sphere, Brad Inwood, *The Poem of Empedocles* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001), p. 68.

immersed in the result of the working of these laws, the sphere.[23] Furthermore, because it primarily leads to the emergence of the sphere, love is a positive force – positive from God's perspective.

The sphere phase is but one phase of the evolution of the universe. The sphere loses its homogeneity, and the elements become more and more separate. What becomes of the *Phren* then? The universe becomes ruled more and more by strife, and the *Phren* becomes weaker and weaker. But it never ceases to exist. Because the *Phren*'s thoughts dart through the universe (as effluences, similarly to the mechanism of perception as reported by Theophrastus), the *Phren* does not lose a grip on the universe. By so darting through the world, the *Phren* steers it and has it under its control and remains the measure of what is harmonious and thus fitting to exist.

However, at the stage when strife rules completely, the *Phren*'s immediate presence is more limited. The universe is now a hostile environment, but the *Phren* still exists and is distributed over the universe because "all things have intelligence (*phronesis*) and share of thought (*noema*)" (B110.10).[24] Although God is not limited to it, he appears to be the strongest in the outermost sphere, the sphere of fire. Empedocles singled out fire when he "taught that [all] parts of fire, <the visible and> the invisible, have intelligence and equal knowledge (φρόνησιν ἔχειν καὶ γνώμην ἴσην)."[25] The fiery part of the universe at the state of separation would be most divine because the *Phren* would there be the strongest. In this sense, it would be true that God encompasses the world.[26]

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[23] "The more God is immersed in his own harmony, the more he is anchored, more immobile," Bollack, *Empédocle*, vol. 3, p. 136.

[24] Reiche, *Empedocles' Mixture*, p. 13, suggests that "all things" should refer only to "organic mixtures of all types," because according to Sextus' comment (8.286), Empedocles taught that "all things – and not only animals but also plants – are rational" when he wrote B110.10. But if so, then there would not be any intelligence in the world devoid of life – the world of total victory of strife – and thus God would cease to exist altogether, which can hardly be fitted into Empedocles' system.

[25] Hippolytus, *Ref.* 6.12.1 = B110. Hippolytus' statement that for Empedocles "God is the intelligent fire" (*Ref.* 1.3.1 = A31) sounds very much like a pronouncement from the system of Heraclitus or the Stoics, particularly considering the allusion to the world conflagration (all things "will be dissolved into fire"), but it could be harmonized with Empedocles' views on God and in particular with the just quoted Hippolytus' ascription to Empedocles of the view on intelligibility of fire. O'Brien says that the first chapter of *Refutatio* shows "a profound ignorance of the doctrine of Empedocles" and in a later chapter, Hippolytus has documentation of "exceptional quality," Denis O'Brien, *Pour interpreter Empédocle* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1981), p. 20 note 1. It would appear that even the first chapter is not without value.

[26] This view is espoused by Shirley M. Darcus, 'Daimon parallels the Holy Phren in Empedocles', *Phronesis* 22 (1977), p. 177, who, however, seems to separate God from the elements altogether when she says that all the four elements "are held within the Divine *Phren*," p. 185. What then is the physical makeup of the *Phren*? It would seem that God is completely different from the elements. God cannot be reduced to love and strife, either, which, according to Darcus, are God's only two thoughts that dart through the universe. There may be only one support to this view found in Aetius that for Empedocles the universe is the cosmos and inert matter (1.5.2 = A47). Could this inert matter be the holy *Phren*?

The fact that the *Phren* is strongest at the outside region of the universe during strife's reign is confirmed by the status of aether in Empedocles' system. Two sources seem to distinguish air and fire from aether when describing the order in which elements are separated from the sphere: "aether was separated off first, then fire, then earth," and then water is separated off from earth and air from water, reports Aetius (2.6.3 = A49). "After aether is separated, air and fire revolved upwards and formed heavens and revolved in wide orbit," says Philo (*De prov.* 2.60–61 = A49). These testimonies may suggest that there are not four, but five elements, but it seems more possible to view aether as a mixture of fire and air: fiery air[27] (Aetius mentions a fiery element contained in air that is used as material to form stars, 2.13.2 = A53). It must be important for Empedocles to introduce this compound element, aether. This importance should not only stem from using a term that others use. It appears that aether maintains its integrity even at the stage of strife's prevalence.[28] Because aether separates first, it occupies the outermost position in the world of concentric circles of separated elements.[29] If we assume that love is at this stage on the outermost limits of the universe – on "the furthest limits of the circle"[30] – then love would assure the integrity of aether in this region of the world. And because aether is a mixture, this would be a region in which the *Phren* is the strongest.

All this indicates that Empedocles' God evolves over time. He is a mutable God who evolves from the *Phren* that permeates the entire sphere, to the *Phren* that recedes to the outermost sphere of the universe to control it from afar. However, the *Phren* remains the *Phren* throughout all these vicissitudes, always immanent in the world.

The divine *Phren* is not the only *phren* that exists. Man also has *phren* which requires attention and should be cherished and cared for. This is done through learning, through which *phren* can grow. Empedocles assures Pausanias: "learning will expand your *phren*" (B17.14). One must watch that deception does not overcome one's *phren* (Simplicius, *In Phys*. 160.9 = B23.9) and only man "wise in his *phren*" can protect himself from falsehood (Plutarch, *Adv. Col.* 1113d = B15.1). This is not always an easy task because people are defensive about new and unexpected truths, such as the ones pronounced by Empedocles, and "the onrush of conviction (πίστις) on the *phren* is difficult for them and is resented" (Clement, *Strom.* 5.9.1 = B114).

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[27] O'Brien, *Empedocles' Cosmic Cycle*, pp. 290–292; Inwood, *The poem of Empedocles*, p. 106 note 36. See Peter Kingsley, *Ancient Philosophy, Mystery, and Magic: Empedocles and Pythagorean tradition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), pp. 15–35, 40, for an argument that aether is heaven and the outer boundary of the universe and also air around us and *aer* is misty air.

[28] It is by no means obvious that aether must eventually be separated into fire and air, as suggested by O'Brien, *Empedocles' Cosmic Cycle*, p. 290.

[29] It seems to be too generous to suggest that on "the extreme circumference there is a band of elements in the state of perfect mixture," all four elements, that is, Wright, *Empedocles*, p. 207.

[30] Simplicius, *In Phys*. 32.20 = B35.10. From this position, love later "gets into the middle of the whirl" (B35.4); cf. Wright, *Empedocles*, pp. 74, 207. Arguments are made that love is in the center of separated elements, O'Brien, *Empedocles' Cosmic Cycle*, p. 105, Bollack, *Empédocle*, vol. 3, p. 197.

The *Phren* that is an embodiment of the rationality of the world has also a moral dimension. The ideal setting for the *Phren* is the sphere because all the four elements are equally and perfectly mixed in it. The closest approximation to this ultimate mixture is the blood and the flesh. Blood and flesh are miniature approximations of the makeup of the sphere and, not surprisingly, man's rationality is directly associated with the blood: "for men, thought (νόημα) is blood around the heart."[31] Because blood is closest to the sphere in respect to its material composition and structure, it can host man's rational dimension that is a reflection, albeit imperfect, of the divine *Phren*. This has very practical consequences that Empedocles describes in the *Purifications*. Who destroys an almost divine setting for an almost divine *phren* commits a crime not only on another human or animal, but also on the *Phren*. An inescapable consequence is a swift punishment, a punishment that is allotted in accordance to a divine law, "a law for all [which] extends through the broad air and through the boundless light."[32] A crime against a man and – considering the fact of reincarnation (for example, Hippolytus, *Ref.* 1.3.2 = B117; Aelian, *De nat. anim*. 12.7 = B127) – against an animal is a crime against the divine and a universal law of justice prohibits that very strictly. For this reason, "the cruel deed of eating flesh" (Porphyry, *De abst.* 2.31 = B139) is abominable and punishable and strict vegetarianism is prescribed. However, unconstrained vegetarianism is not an option, either. In the course of reincarnation, a man can become a bush (B117) and a plant, particularly a laurel tree (B127), so that it is explicitly said that people should "keep altogether from the leaves of the laurel" (Plutarch, *Quaest. conv.* 646d = B140). Beans are also mentioned as plants which people should keep their hands off (Gellius 4.11.9 = B141). Since everything is endowed with a measure of intelligence and anything may become a dwelling place for a human *daimon* after death, the dietary rules become a real challenge in the Empedoclean world.

According to Empedocles, "the greatest crime among men [is] to bereave of life and eat noble limbs" of animals – bulls in particular (Theophrastus, *ap.* Porphyry, *De abst.* 2.27 = B128.9–10). When a father sacrifices an animal, he really could be sacrificing his own son (SE 9.129 = B136 + B137). An apparently pious act of sacrificing an animal amounts to a murder. If religious sacrifices are a crime, all the more so is bloodletting in any situation. War is a crime against men and against God, and it should be avoided at all costs. Empedocles' vision is that by pure living – that includes vegetarianism, no animal sacrifices, and avoiding wars – men come

[31] Porphyry, *ap.* Stobaeus 1.49.53 = B105. The words *phren*, *phronesis* (that have the same root), and *noema* are approximately synonymous in Empedocles, cf. Walter Veazie, *Empedocles' Psychological Doctrine in Its Original and in Its Traditional Setting* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1922), p. 4.

[32] Aristotle, *Rhet.* 1373b16–17 = B135. As correctly indicated by van der Ben, *The Proem of Empedocles' Peri physios*, p. 196, because air "extends from the firmament of heaven all the way down to earth and the light of the sun (αὐγή) not only shines up to heaven but also down to earth," the validity of the law is not confined to heaven only but to all who breath the air and see the sunlight. This is truly a "grandiose statement of a universal law," Günther Zuntz, *Persephone: three essays on religion and thought in Magna Graecia* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), p. 219.

as close as possible to the divine.[33] Was there any meaning in any sacrifices at all? Since all the deities of the traditional mythology are mortal gods who are shaped by human imagination, only sacrifices to immortal gods can be considered. There is no hint of making sacrifices to any of the four elements. In only one fragment is there a mention of bloodless sacrifices made to Cypris, that is, Aphrodite, when "there was no Ares, nor Tumult, nor Zeus was the king, nor Cronus, nor Poseidon" (Theophrastus, *ap.* Porphyry, *De abst.* 2.21 = B128.1–3). This was the time when love began to recede and strife to increase its influence – the golden age, unlike the age described by Hesiod.[34] Whether Empedocles simply described one of the stages of human history or wanted to make recommendations for the way sacrifices should be made in his own age is uncertain.[35] People worshipped Aphrodite with bloodless sacrifices, but they did not realize that Aphrodite is really a mythical representation of the real physical force of love[36] whose increase and decrease happens under the direction of God through the law of harmony. Does it make sense to offer sacrifices to such a deity? Although the general tendency of world evolution is prescribed by necessity, there is still plenty of room for variations in the way love and strife influence developments in particular parts of the universe. It is, thus, possible that sacrifices may make a difference in that respect for a certain period of time in a certain place. Therefore, it is more meaningful to make sacrifices to love than to God. The Empedoclean God does not elicit much of an attitude of worship. God the holy *Phren* is most happy when indwelling the sphere. All other stages of world history are, from God's perspective, a necessary evil. God is not concerned about our world. Empedocles' God is not the God of love;[37] he uses love to attain his goal. This world is just a stepping stone for achieving the stage of the sphere. If anyone in the world undermines the scope of the sphere, or rather the sphere-like tissues of blood and flesh, he is liable for punishment. On the other hand, if people were precipitating the reign of the sphere by pure living, abstention from blood, and so on, this would mean that they precipitate their own annihilation and thus the happiness of God. There is no escape from destruction in this world, whether under the growing influence of love or strife. There is only an existence in this "joyless place" (Hierocles, *In Aurea carmina* 24.2 = B121, cf. Clement, *Strom.* 3.14.2 = B118).

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[33] "An end of bloodshed would mean the restoration of mankind to divine status," van der Ben, *The Proem of Empedocles' Peri physios*, p. 176.

[34] Cf. Zuntz, *Persephone*, pp. 206–207.

[35] Zuntz, *Persephone*, p. 259, suggests that Empedocles wanted "a reform of the cult of his day."

[36] The fact that Cypris-Aphrodite in B128 represents love was already stressed in a parenthetical remark, ἥ ἐστιν ἡ φιλία, of Theophrastus who quotes B128; see also Jacob Bernays, *Theophrastos' Schrift über Frömmigkeit* (Berlin: Hertz, 1866; reprinted Hildesheim: Olms, 1979), p. 95; Walter Pötscher, commentaries to *Theophrastos*, Περὶ εὐσεβείας (Leiden: Brill, 1964), pp. 64–65.

[37] As suggested by Lommatzsch, *Die Weisheit des Empedocles*, pp. 78, 87.

Immortality

It has already been mentioned that Empedocles believes in reincarnation. This does not mean an immortal existence after death.[38] Empedocles refers to immortality, even his own immortality. He also mentions *daimones*, that are apparently different than the gods, as being "allotted long-lasting life" (B115.5).[39]

It seems that for Empedocles the *daimon* is a fallen god that is united with a body, a human body at first, but in the process of reincarnation, it can be present in an animal or even a plant body. A god is a miniature God: a *phren* that can exist most comfortably and happily in a perfect mixture of the sphere. It is unclear whether such an individual *phren* can exist by itself in the sphere or is part of the holy *Phren* and then separated from it. True immortality would require that an individual *phren*-god retains its individuality even in the sphere, but it is possible to see such a singular *phren* as created anew from the *Phren* by strife at the beginning of the phase of increasing strife. In that case, a god would be just potentiality existing, as it were, within the womb of the *Phren*.[40] Such a potential-only existence of *phrenes* in the *Phren* is indicated by the fact that the *Phren* exists in solitude (B28) in the sphere. Within the confines of a human body, a god exists as a *phren* due to the existence of blood in the body. However, because of the imperfection of the mixture constituting blood and flesh of the body, human *phren* is weaker as would be the case in the sphere and leads man to unseemly deeds such as eating flesh whereby man, and thus the *phren*, become polluted. It requires special effort to retain purity, which can be accomplished only by a few: Clement remarks that according to Empedocles, "the souls of the wise become gods" (*Strom.* 4.150.1 = B146). To be sure, Empedocles includes himself among such ones and thus calls himself an immortal god: "An immortal god, mortal no more, I go about honored by all" (DL 8.61 = B112.4–5). Man can improve himself (Porphyry, *Vita Pyth.* 30 = B129, B146, Clement, *Strom.* 5.140.5 = B132), and as a man he remains an ephemeral being, but, by improving himself, he purifies the *phren* within himself and can cease to be mortal by raising himself to the level of immortality. The edge of the hubristic statement that he is a god does not have to be blunted by saying that only others elevated him to that status.[41] He seems to have truly believed that such an elevation by one's own power is possible, and the doxographers who state that "he went from city to city wanting to pass for a god" (*Suda* = A2; Philostratus *Vita Ap.* 8.76 = A18) and that "in his desire to pass for an immortal god," Empedocles jumped into Etna (Strabo 6.2.8 = A16) are not far off from the spirit of Empedoclean vision of the afterlife.

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[38] The point is forcefully argued by O'Brien, *Empedocles' Cosmic Cycle*, p. 85.

[39] Cf. Darcus, 'Daimon parallels the Holy Phren in Empedocles', p. 186.

[40] Cf. Inwood, *The Poem of Empedocles*, p. 61.

[41] "I am honored among all as an immortal god" does not imply "I declare that I am a god." "The statement does not express Empedocles' own conviction but merely describes the attitude people assume towards him," van der Ben, *The Proem of Empedocles' Peri physios*, p. 22. It is possible to see the *daimon* is "a portion of deity" (cf. Kahn, 'Religion and natural philosophy in Empedocles' doctrine of the soul', p. 26) in a manner of the Stoics. In this case, a statement of being a god is supposedly an expression of humility rather than hubris, as maintained by Lommatzsch, *Die Weisheit des Empedocles*, pp. 30–31.

An individual *phren* in an ideal setting of the sphere is a god, if only as the potentiality within the *Phren*. After dissipation of the sphere, the perfection of the *phren* diminishes and it becomes a *daimon* when it exists in the "alien garment" of a human body.[42] Purification rites purify the body and through the body also the *phren*. The *phren* can also be strengthened directly by mental development. Through these exercises the *daimon* can become a god again.[43] If not, the *phren* can be annihilated and thereby its individual, immortal existence. The borderline between mortality and immortality can be crossed in both directions. The disappearance of the sphere makes it dangerously easy to lose immortality by careless living. But an individual effort can let mortals through the threshold of immortality. However, in the Empedoclean world, the holy *Phren* is of no help in this endeavor. It appears that the Empedoclean God is only a spectator of the human struggles in the world. This is bleak physics and unappealing theology that is of little spiritual comfort for those who would like to find in religion any consolation. By purifying traditional religion, from very often unpalatable anthropomorphism of the Olympian gods, Empedocles offers a system that is philosophically more elegant but spiritually just as unfulfilling as the world of the gods of old.

[42] Porphyry, *ap.* Stobaeus 1.49.60 = B126. This may be what Zuntz meant in the phrase that the *daimon* is "a divine potency stripped, for an aeon, of his divine identity," *Persephone*, p. 271.

[43] And only a few will succeed, Karl Kerényi, *Pythagoras und Orpheus* (Zürich: Rhein-Verlag, 1950), p. 23.

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Chapter 7

Anaxagoras and Mind

It is said that "Anaxagoras was the first philosopher who elevated spirit above matter, whereby he started a new era in theology,"[1] which is not an isolated opinion since, for example, Eusebius says that Anaxagoras and his school were the first in Greece that talked about God (*Praep. ev.* 14.16.12). In Antiquity, there was a common opinion that Anaxagoras was the first who thought that Mind (νοῦς) has a control over the entire universe (for example, Plutarch, *Pericles* 4 = A15; Clement, *Strom.* 2.14.2 = A57). What is this Mind, what are its attributes and, although Anaxagoras himself does not say it explicitly, what allowed later philosophers to see Mind as God?

Mind's attributes

Most information about Mind (νοῦς) comes from fr. B12 (= Simplicius, *In Phys*. 156.14–157.4), from which we learn that Mind is infinite, autonomous, mixed with no thing, independent, omniscience, and all-powerful.

Mind is infinite in the sense that it is not limited by space since it exists everywhere where matter is (Simplicius, *In Phys*. 157.7–9 = B14) which is infinite and composed of an infinite number of parts (Simplicius, *In Phys*. 155.26–30 = B1; 155.30–156.1 = B2; Cicero, *Acad.* 2.118). Mind is also infinite in a temporal sense by being eternal, not limited by time (B14). It can be said that because Mind is mixed with no substance, its infinity means not being limited by any substance, that is, Mind does not have extension. Although this cannot be ruled out, a natural interpretation of Mind's infinity seems to be that Mind has power over everything and that this is "infinity incomprehensible for the human mind" (Augustine, *Ep.* 118.4). Furthermore, because everything else is in space, infinity means nonexistence of spatial limits for Mind: regardless of how large – or small – some entities or substances can be and regardless of their location, Mind can wield full control over them.[2]

Mind is not mixed with anything because, as Anaxagoras argues in B12, Mind has control over all things. The statement can be interpreted to mean that by being mixed with no thing, Mind can permeate everything and so control all things. According to Philoponus, if Mind were made from any material substance, the substance would be

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[1] Konrad Elser, *Die Lehre des Aristoteles über das Wirken Gottes* (Münster: Aschendorffsche Buchhandlung, 1893), p. 3.

[2] "There are no external limits in space, beyond which the sphere of Mind's power ends," Otto Jöhrens, *Die Fragmente des Anaxagoras* (Bochum-Langendreer: Pöppinghaus, 1939; reprinted in *Early Greek Thought: three studies,* New York: Garland, 1987), pp. 43, 45; Max Heinze, 'Über den Noûς des Anaxagoras', *Berichte über die Verhandlungen der Königlich Sächsischen Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften* 1890, pp. 15–16.

an obstacle in knowing other substances "as colored glass does not let through other colors" (*In Phys.* 833.11–12) and as "the organ of touch does not detect a warm object of the same temperature [as the organ]" (*In De anima* 522.33). This is a peripatetic argument since, as Philoponus himself states it, for Aristotle, "to rule" means the same as "to know."[3] But the argument is not groundless. If Mind were mixed with some substance, then by the very fact of its presence, the substance would influence Mind. For example, dry substance would be an obstacle in controlling wet substances. A similar argument was used in medical theory of Anaxagoras' times. According to the theory, an illness is the result of imbalance between the four humors (χυμοί), which signify the taste of a substance as well as the substance itself. Prevalence of one of the humors leads to an imbalance in the body, that is, to illness, whereby physical and mental abilities are impaired. Therefore, if by nature Mind is free of any admixture of any material substance, it is free from fluctuations of the substance and thus free from effects that fluctuations of humors can cause in the human body. If Mind should be all-powerful and its power over material substances should not be in any doubt, then Mind should be substantially and essentially different from everything else and, in particular, Mind should be free of any admixture of any substance.

Mind is omniscient. Mind "possesses all knowledge (γνώμη) about everything ... And Mind knew everything that is mixed and separated off and discernible" (B12).[4] Mind has full knowledge of what was, is, and will be before it started creating the world from the primal mixture of substances. There is no room for unpredictable phenomena in nature; Mind's knowledge encompasses all knowledge about all things. This is rational knowledge that can be possessed by a being mixed with no thing since any admixture could potentially distort knowledge just as much as it could impair Mind's cognitive powers. Mind does not acquire this knowledge; it has always possessed it and as a being of different nature than the elements of the primal mixture, it does not need sensory organs to acquire sensory knowledge. Moreover, since Mind knows everything, it possesses consciousness and – as it is concluded – personality. Perhaps the notion of "Mind not endowed with nothing with which it could sense eludes the grasp of our understanding," as Cicero says (*De nat. deor.* 1.27 = A48), but this does not have to be an argument against the vision of Mind proposed by Anaxagoras.

Mind is omnipotent. "Mind ordered everything what was to be and what was and what now is not [any more] and what now is and what will be" (B12). Its power is infinite since matter which it controls is infinite: in matter "there is nothing that is smallest since always there is something smaller ... and as to big, there is always something bigger" (Simplicius, *In Phys*. 164.17–20 = B3). Matter is infinite in the big and in the small, it is infinitely divisible, unlimited by space and also it contains an infinite number of mutually irreducible substances (Simplicius,

[3] The identification is mentioned in passing by Aristotle in his reference to Anaxagoras, *De anima* 429a19–20. Cf. Gordon H. Clark, *Empedocles and Anaxagoras in Aristotle's De anima* (Philadelphia, 1929), pp. 47–48.

[4] A case is made that γνώμη means decision rather than knowledge, which is to signify that Anaxagoras "was attributing to his cosmic intelligence much more than just knowledge," J.H. Lesher, 'Mind's knowledge and powers of control in Anaxagoras DK B12', *Phronesis* 40 (1995), p. 142.

In Phys. 155.27–30 = B1, 156.2–9 + 157.9–12 = B4). This is an extraordinary vision of infinity of matter which has to be matched by knowledge and power of Mind if Mind should be able to control everything. This is not, however, an absolute power since matter is coeval with Mind. Mind does not create matter, it only shapes it. The concept of *creatio ex nihilo* was alien to Greek philosophy.

Is Mind an immaterial being? We should not expect a clear statement in this matter from Anaxagoras since the requisite terminology did not yet exist. We have to wait until Plato to read about immaterial (ἀσώματα) idea (*Soph.* 246b) and immaterial order (*Philebus* 64b).[5] However, some statements seem to suggest that Mind is of material nature because Anaxagoras says that Mind is subtlest of all things (λεπτότατον πάντων χρημάτων) and purest.[6] The fact that Anaxagoras uses the phrase "of all things" does not have to mean that Mind is on the same level as elements of the primal mixture in which "all things (χρήματα) were together" (B1) and which were acted upon by Mind. When at about the same time Protagoras made the famed pronouncement that "man is a measure of all things," he meant by these things what exists and what does not exist.[7] Therefore, the word "things" was then used in a very general sense just as in the English phrase "how are things?" in which the word does not refer to palpable objects, but to situations and the like.

How should the statement be treated that Mind is subtle and pure, that is, with no admixtures? Although the word *lepton* usually describes material substances, already Homer used it to describe wisdom (μῆτις, *Il.* 10.226, 23.590), and Euripides described with it the mind (νοῦς, *Medea* 529). Anaxagoras also says that Mind is where all the other things are (B14), which may suggest that Mind has extension. However, the statement may convey the conviction that Mind must be in some contact with matter to control it. Therefore, the fact that Mind is considered a subtle substance does not prejudge that it is a material substance.

No doubt, Mind is of different nature than anything else. It mixes with nothing and although it can be present in other things, it is present in an unmixed form. Impossibility to be mixed with anything points to Mind's different nature and this difference may be seen as the manifestation of its immaterial essence. If it is difficult to accept unreservedly the immaterial character of Mind, then certainly acceptable is a cautious opinion that in Anaxagoras' concept of Mind "there is an oscillation between corporeality and incorporeality."[8] But it would be difficult to accept the notion that Mind "is evidently corporeal."[9]

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[5] Plato refers to an *asomatos* entity in three more places: *Phaedo* 85e, *Soph.* 247c, *Pol.* 286a; cf. Heinrich Gomperz, 'Ασώματος, *Hermes* 67 (1932), p. 155.

[6] Mind is "an infinitely subtle substance," as rendered by Charles M. Zevort, *Anaxagore* (Paris: Joubert, 1843), p. 67.

[7] SE 7.60 = 80B1; cf. also Heinze, 'Über den Noûς des Anaxagoras', pp. 20–22.

[8] Sven-Tage Teodorsson, *Anaxagoras' Theory of Matter* (Göteborg: Acta Universitatis Gothoburgensis, 1982), p. 91. As stated more boldly, "Anaxagoras probably intended us to understand by *Nous* an incorporeal essence," but the lack of proper terminology prevented him from making it clear, James Adam, *The Vitality of Platonism and Other Essays* (Cambridge: University Press, 1911), p. 43.

[9] Lloyd P. Gerson, *God and Greek Philosophy* (London: Routledge, 1990), p. 30.

Is Mind God? Anaxagoras himself does not make this identification; however, the attributes he ascribes to Mind can hardly raise any doubt in that respect. Supreme divinity is an infinite, omniscient, all-powerful being that brought the world into being, if only from pre-existing matter. It is thus not surprising that the commentators of Anaxagoras' system soon made this identification. Josephus lists Anaxagoras among those whose vision of God is close to the vision of God of the Hebrew Bible (*Contra Ap.* 2.17), and many simply state that Anaxagoras himself considered Mind to be God (Cicero, *Acad.* 2.118 = A49; SE 9.6; Lactantius, *Inst. div.* 1.5.18; Augustine, *De civ. Dei* 8.2).

Creating the world

How did Mind accomplish its task of creating the world? In the beginning, "all things were together" (B1) forming a mixture of an infinite number of infinitely divisible substance, attributes (opposites), and seeds. Initially, matter was uniform and unordered, although the lack of order is not tantamount to total chaos. Although it is not certain what exactly is the difference between attributes and substances, and between substances and seeds, there had to be some differences between them if they were treated as different components of the primal mixture. A seed, to be a seed, must lead to the emergence of some entity that potentially exists in the seed. There are an infinity of seeds, there are thus an infinity of characteristics that form the potential of the seeds so that an apple tree comes from a seed of an apple tree, and a cricket from a cricket seed. That is, there was already some order in the mixture, at least in respect to the nature and structure of its elements, so that Mind began its molding task with a material that was already moderately structured. The lack of order in the mixture consisted at least in that the components were thoroughly mixed together, and Mind had to separate them. By gradually bringing matter into motion, Mind causes separation of substances and structures them into cosmos, and spurs the potential of the seeds to the emergence of entities of which they are seeds. In this way, by giving the first impulse and a degree of separation of seeds from one another and from substances, Mind releases the potential of the seeds heretofore lying dormant in them. A complete separation of substances and seeds, however, is impossible because in the cosmos there are no qualitative changes, therefore, if something comes into being, it is because it already existed in an undeveloped form. Everything is in everything, everything is everywhere, and the emergence of new entities in the cosmos consists in greater concentration of some substances in some place. However, regardless of the degree of concentration, there are also in the same place traces of other substances: bone is bone because of higher concentration of bony substance than other substances, although never can the other substances be separated out from bone. The principle "everything in everything" repeatedly pronounced by Anaxagoras (Simplicius, *In Phys.* 164.26–165.1 = B6; 164.23–24 = B11; B12) does not cease to be valid on any level of the division of matter.[10] Separation is thus a means of ordering matter into cosmos. In a sense, the task is never finished because complete separation of

[10] Adam Drozdek, 'Anaxagoras and the everything in everything principle', *Hermes* 133 (2005), 163–177.

substances is impossible. However, if it had been possible, this would not at all have amounted to a more ordered cosmos. In the extreme case, it can be said in the spirit of Empedocles that if separation had been possible, there would have been an area in space filled with one substance, another area filled with another substance, and so on.[11] This would be an order, but hardly an order amounting to anything significant, at least, to the world we know. Therefore, Anaxagoras' insistence through the everything in everything principle that the complete separation of substances is impossible is the means to guarantee that an ordered and beautiful universe can emerge. In the word διακόσμησις, δια- is just as important as -κόσμησις:[12] cosmic order is the result of separation, but the separation cannot be fully accomplished because matter is so ordered that this is impossible.

Mind is thus indispensable to give matter the first impulse of the rotational motion that leads to the organization of matter into the cosmos. Mind has in this the role of the first mover and organizer of matter, that is, the creator, or rather the shaper, of the world. As mentioned, the primal mixture had already a degree of organization. Was the mixture completely inert? This is not known, but it is possible that some random motion of elements of the mixture already existed, just as in the prime matter in Plato's system before the Demiurge started his creative activity. It can be also conjectured that the motion in the primal mixture was impossible because it was a mixture, that is, its elements blocked one another. In this case, Mind was the first mover precisely because it was mixed with no thing and so its purity would guarantee its dynamic character. Although mixture never ceases to be a mixture and the principle "everything in everything" is never suspended, the change in proportion of elements in a particular section of space releases the motion characterizing these substances.

Does Mind itself move? Aristotle says that Mind is unchangeable because only what is unchangeable can be an ultimate source of motion (*Phys.* 256b24–27 = A56). The argument, however, is valid only in Aristotle's physics and metaphysics and, theoretically, does not rule out a possibility to see the source of motion as also in motion, as exemplified by the self-moving soul in Plato's system. Philoponus gives a better justification of Mind's immutability when he says that, according to Anaxagoras, the only types of change are separation and recombination (*In Phys*. 833.5–6; cf. Simplicius, *In Phys*. 163.20–23 = B17). Because Mind is mixed with no thing, there is nothing it should be separated from and nothing to be recombined with. Mind's immutability is thus a consequence of the kinds of change and of its purity.

Is our world the only world created by Mind? In fr. B4, Anaxagoras suggests the existence of other worlds, which are sometimes viewed as parts of the Earth. However, because Anaxagoras so often uses the concept of infinity, it would not be impossible if in his opinion there were other worlds beyond ours. An infinity of worlds can be shown thus.

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[11] Such a view can be found to some extent in Anaxagoras when we accept the veracity of Diogenes Laertius' description of the separation of the four elements in the Anaxagorean universe (2.8 = A1).

[12] *Pace* André Laks, 'Mind's crisis. On Anaxagoras' νοῦς', *Southern Journal of Philosophy* 31 (1993), Supplement, p. 31.

Because for Anaxagoras, "as to the large, there is always [something] larger" (B3), it can be supposed that the primal mixture was infinitely extended. Because he denied the existence of the void (Aristotle, *De caelo* 319a19–20 = A68), the infinite space was completely filled with matter. On the other hand, "rotation [of the mixture] started from something small, it extends [now] more widely and it will extend [yet] more widely" (B12). This means that the process of creating the cosmos is not yet finished. To finish it, the entire infinite mixture would have to be rotated. But rotation progressed gradually, and thus the process of bringing the mixture into motion cannot be done in finite time. Therefore, either the process of creating the cosmos will never be finished, or at some point in time, the part of the mixture that is not rotating, and still an infinite amount of it, will become moved all at once.

It is possible that space and mixture are limited, which does not invalidate the statement that "as to the large, there is always [something] larger."[13] However, it seems more likely that Anaxagoras would not opt for this solution, choosing – with the atomists – the infinite space. If so, and if the progression of rotation takes place in finite steps, then the existence of infinity of worlds is very likely. Because the process of creating the cosmos still continues, it is possible that other worlds like ours were created and in the future the number of these worlds will grow, potentially into infinity.

The progressive creation of the cosmos and the emergence of new worlds seem to be the results of the mechanical process initiated by Mind. Rotational motion extends into infinity in the mixture as do the circles on water after throwing a stone. It is very likely that such a simple observation suggested to Anaxagoras such a cosmological vision. Mind, as it were, threw a stone into primal mixture and left the spreading of rotational movement to the mixture and its constitutive elements. Such a view is confirmed by Plato's and Aristotle's critique of Anaxagoras' system.

The separation of Mind from matter was, according to Plato and Aristotle, invaluable for the explanation of natural processes. However, Plato criticizes Anaxagoras for considering Mind to be a cause of everything but not making proper use of Mind by "mentioning as causes air and aether and water and many other strange things" (*Phaedo* 97c–98d = A47). Aristotle says that Anaxagoras limited the activity of Mind to creating the world, when he could not give a cause and when Mind appeared like a *deus ex machina*, in other cases making use of everything else but Mind (*Met.* 985a18–21 = A47). According to Clement, Anaxagoras described "some strange rotations that make no sense when Mind was completely inactive and thoughtless" (*Strom.* 2.14.2 = A57). All these critics seem to be of the opinion that Anaxagoras ascribes too much weight – or any weight, for that matter – to mechanical, natural processes, to automatic changes that are not under direct supervision of Mind. This, in essence, is the criticism of his deism, that is, of the view that Mind limited itself to giving matter the first impulse and withdrew from an active participation of the processes in nature.

[13] Cf. the infinite number of intervals, one larger that another, but all of them are enclosed in a limited space: [0, 1–1/2], [0, 1–1/4], [0, 1–1/8], …, [0, 1–1/2^n], ….

Mind, life, and rationality

The activity of Mind is not at all limited to giving the first impulse to the world. Mind is not completely separated from the world. Although it does not have any admixture, there are in the world some beings in which Mind is present (B11). A guess can be ventured as to the identity of these beings when we read that "Mind controls (κρατεῖ) everything that has soul (ψυχὴν ἔχει), both small and large. And Mind controlled (ἐκράτησεν) the whole rotation so that it could start at the beginning" (B12).[14] Mind is thus present in ensouled – that is, living – beings. Noteworthy is the use of tenses: the aorist in the case of rotation, when the activity of Mind belongs to the past, and the present in the case of living beings since mind is continuously present in the world manifesting its activity in living beings, that is, in people, animals, and plants.[15] Aristotle considered this solution to be at least unclear since, as he says, "in many places [Anaxagoras] tells us that Mind is the cause of beauty and order, in other places – that it is soul" (*De anim*a 404b1–3 = A100) and he practically treats Mind and soul as one substance (405a13–15 = A100). But the criticism itself is not altogether clear and may be based on nonextant statements of Anaxagoras: in fact, Anaxagoras does not say anything about a cause of beauty and about soul being a cause of order. Philoponus comments on Aristotle's statement by saying that Anaxagoras distinguished Mind and soul at the stage of creating the cosmos, after which Mind and soul are identified (*In De anima* 72.9–10).

In any event, Mind seems to be present in living beings. This does not mean that Mind is mixed with these beings, in particular, with the essence of their lives, their souls. Therefore, Aristotle's and Philoponus' criticism that Anaxagoras identifies Mind and soul goes too far.

One way of explaining the statement that Mind controls everything that has soul is by seeing life as being of higher order than inanimate nature and apparently requiring constant supervision of Mind. For inanimate nature, the first impulse seems to be sufficient: the impulse releases mechanical laws responsible for all future changes. However, soul is the principle of life whose activity depends on constant control of Mind or at least cooperation with Mind. Soul in living being and Mind are thus different substances, soul being material principle of life and Mind being life's rational, intelligible, extramaterial principle. Anaxagoras would thus agree with the statement of Euripides, his follower, that "Mind is God in all of us,"[16] but not with Aristotle when he says that Anaxagoras' pronouncements imply identity of soul and Mind.

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[14] This statement is used as an argument that "more clearly Anaxagoras could not express the identity of the two concepts, *nous* and *psyche*," Fritz Krohn, *Der νοῦς bei Anaxagoras* (Münster: Bredt, 1907), p. 13. But it rather seems that the statement could not show more clearly that the two concepts are not identical.

[15] "Anaxagoras declared that [plants] are animals and feel joy and sadness," pseudo-Aristotle, *De plantis* 815a18–19 = A117; "they possess mind and knowledge" (b17).

[16] Fr. 1018 = A48. When quoting Euripides, Zafiropulo says that Anaxagoras identified "our soul with 'god in us,' with Mind," Jean Zafiropulo, *Anaxagore de Clazomène* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1948), p. 331. Similarly, although in milder form, Malcolm Schofield, *An Essay on Anaxagoras* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), p. 21.

A consequence of this belief is the view that soul is substance which, like any substance, always existed as part of the primal mixture and which is a subject of the everything in everything principle.[17] In this sense, Anaxagoras is a panpsychist when he believes that in each particle of matter there are particles of soul; however, by the very fact of their presence in each particle of matter, the particle is not animate. Life requires a requisite concentration and structuring of particles of soul in a particular place, which can only be accomplished by Mind. Mind is something different from soul and thus from life. A similar opinion can be found in Aristotle,[18] and in Tertullian when he says that Mind as a being mixed with no thing is not mixed with life.[19] Does this mean that Mind is lifeless? To an extent. Mind does not possess life in the same sense as material, animate beings, such as men, but this does not mean that it reduces Mind to the level of stones and water. Mind is of a different nature than anything else in nature and of a different nature than life of living beings that exist in the cosmos. Mind is the principle of the orderliness of the cosmos, and this orderliness includes the existence of the soul, that is, of life.[20] Rationality of Mind is thus elevated not only above nature and its order, but also above life itself. Mind is not dead, not non-living, but also is not living through having, or being, a soul. Mind is alive, that is, rationally active, but the cause of its activity is its separation from everything else, including life. The vitality of Mind is of a different sort; it belongs to a higher plane and this vitality is the *sine qua non* for life in nature to fulfill its role, which is possible by the constant presence of Mind in all living beings.

Another way of explaining the statement that Mind controls everything that has soul is by concentrating on the epistemological side of the problem. Man is an intelligent being, but where does this intelligence lie? Does man have a mind of his own? The doxographic tradition says a lot about Anaxagoras' views on sense perception but is silent about rational cognition (in particular, Theophrastus, *De sensu* 27–30, 37, 59 = A92). It seems that the human soul can be considered an organ of reasoning, which is confirmed by the already mentioned frequent identification of the soul and mind apparently present in Anaxagoras' system. It seems, however, that the soul's rational ability must be constantly maintained by the presence of Mind. Mind enables soul's rational abilities when being close to it; otherwise, soul would make the human body alive, but man would be devoid of rational abilities. And so Mind is to the soul what the soul is to the body. The soul maintains life in the body – it is the life of the body – Mind enables rational faculties of the soul. For Anaxagoras, apparently inanimate nature can function on its own without the constant presence of Mind, but life, and in particular,

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[17] Some doxographers explicitly state that Anaxagoras' pupils considered the soul to be air and body and that for Anaxagoras, soul was airy (Aetius 4.3.2 = A93).

[18] Aristotle says that "Anaxagoras seems to distinguish the soul and Mind, but in practice, he treats them as one substance," *De anima* 405a13–15 = A100.

[19] Anaxagoras pronounces Mind to be pure, simple, and unmixed, and "on this grounds he keeps [Mind] away from admixture with the soul and yet at another place he calls it a soul" (*De anima* 12.2).

[20] It is even stated that Anaxagoras himself uses in B12 "an inchoate argument from design," Joseph G. DeFilippo, 'Reply to André Laks on Anaxagoras' νοῦς', *Southern Journal of Philosophy* 31 (1993), Supplement, p. 45, but the argument itself is quite inchoate although the possibility of such an argument is concordant with Anaxagoras' system. A full argument from design was initiated in Greek philosophy by Socrates.

life's rational side, requires the constant supervision of Mind. Mind can be rational without soul, soul cannot be rational without Mind. And so, there is no human mind as a separate entity because in the universe there is only one Mind. It would not be correct to interpret the statement that Mind is present in some things (B11) as saying that each living being has a portion of Mind, just as human soul is a portion of the world *psyche* that penetrates and animates everything that exists, for the Early Stoa and human logos is a fragment of God for the Roman Stoa.[21] However, the nonexistence of a human mind does not amount to being limited to sensory perception alone, that is, being mind-free does not have to mean being mindless. Man can reason only because he is constantly plugged in to the rationality source that energizes the soul. This rationality does not belong to nature, it does not belong to life, and it is not a result of the development of life – it is not a consequence of life. Rationality comes from beyond nature – rationality flows from Mind and Mind's connection with life. For Anaxagoras, the entire rational sphere is separated from each being and transferred as one immense Mind into an extracosmic realm. This Mind returns, so to speak, to the world to ensure through its presence that animate nature functions properly (inanimate nature fares well on its own).

Such a vision of Mind, closer to the monotheism of Christianity and Judaism than to the polytheism of traditional Greek religion, could have been a serious reason to accuse Anaxagoras for "the lack of respect for the gods" (Diodorus 12.39.2 = A17), all the more that Anaxagoras "was very proud of his explanations of the ways of actions of the gods" (Xenophon, *Mem.* 4.7.6 = A73). These explanations, quite clearly, consisted in removing these gods from the scene.

Anaxagoras' Mind is a new quality in comparison to the views of his predecessors, but it can also be considered a continuation of these views. Anaximander's *Apeiron*, infinity, is the source of the cosmos, Heraclitus' Logos is the principle of orderliness of cosmos, Empedocles' Love and Strife are the forces of changes in nature. But the division between nature and the extranatural realm are blurred for them, if it ever existed. Anaxagoras admits the existence of some order in the elements of nature (for example, the organization of seeds), but this order is by itself inept. An intervention from the outside is needed, an intervention of a higher order to release the potentiality of matter. Matter by itself is powerless since an ordered and organized – that is, rational – influence is needed. But rationality is not part of nature. Anaxagoras detaches the principle of order and rationality from nature and places it in a being of different essence than nature. Thereby, he ascends to a higher order of abstraction than his predecessors and opens in philosophy the possibility to analyze rationality in separation from its substrate, and in theology, he initiates the analysis of being that is the cause of the order in nature, which in Christian theology will be strengthened by the treatment of this being as the cause of the nature itself.

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[21] Zevort seems to be close to this interpretation of Anaxagoras' views when he says that an individual mind (a finite intelligence) is "the predominance of sorts of the universal intelligence is a particular being," Zevort, *Anaxagore*, p. 90. Cf. the statement that "soul must be understood as in some way as an individualized form of mind," Clark, *Empedocles and Anaxagoras in Aristotle's De anima*, p. 44; "in every organism … [there is] a piece of Nous as the person, the self, of the organism," Felix M. Cleve, *The Philosophy of Anaxagoras* (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1973), p. 101.

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Chapter 8

Democritus and Necessity

Atoms and void

According to the atomists, the world consists of two types of entities, atoms and the void. The void is introduced to account for the reality of motion in the universe. It is basically a place for atoms. It is infinite because if it were finite, what would be outside its boundaries? The void has a curious ontological status. Unlike other Greek philosophers – Empedocles, Anaxagoras and in particular the Eleatics – Democritus assumed that the void exists, although it is nonbeing.

Atoms are the basic components out of which everything in the world is built. They are ungenerated and indestructible, although Democritus gives no reason why it should be that way. Apparently, atoms are the collective *arche*, and by definition they are eternal.

Atoms are too small to be perceived, but they are building blocks of all things and so the properties of atoms determine the properties of the aggregates. It seems that shape is the most important property of atoms. And Democritus even called atoms shapes (*ideai*).[1] Atoms are also characterized by their size, motion, and indivisibility.[2] These intrinsic properties of atoms are insufficient to account for the organization of the world. To that end, the relational properties – position (spatial orientation) and spatial arrangement – also have to be taken into account.

Atoms are moving in the void, although this does not appear to be a free floating or downward movement, as it is sometimes conjectured. Simplicius reports that "atoms have no natural movement … they are moved by the force of impact" (*In Phys.* 42.10–11 = A47) and that atoms are in continual movement "as the result of force" (*In De caelo* 583.20–22 = 67A16). Other sources confirm that, according to the atomists, the movement of atoms is forced through clashes.[3] This means that there is no first cause of motion because atoms always existed and always were in motion.[4] "This motion of atoms must be understood as having no beginning,

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1 Plutarch, *Adv. Col.* 1110f = A57; Simplicius, *In Phys.* 327.24–25 = B167.

2 Their weight is a secondary property, Pierre-Benjamin Lafaist, *Dissertation sur la philosophie atomistique* (Paris: L'Imprimerie royale, 1833), pp. 68–75; Denis O'Brien, *Democritus, Weight and Size: an exercise in the reconstruction of early Greek philosophy* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1981), pp. 331–332; René Kayser, *Die Urbewegung der Atome bei Leukipp und Demokrit: eine Studie über die Zusammenhänge von Ontologie und Physik im abderitischen Materialismus* (Luxembourg: Societé Luxembourgeoise de Philosophie, 1997), pp. 109–112, 125, 146. Weight became the primary property of atoms in the Epicurean version of atomism.

3 Adolf Brieger, 'Die Urbewegung der Demokritischen Atome', *Philologus* 63 (1904), pp. 593, 595–596; O'Brien, *Democritus, Weight and Size*, pp. 179–181.

4 Cf. Aristotle, *Phys.* 252a32–b2 = A65; *De gen. anim.* 742b17–35.

but as having gone on from eternity."[5] The ungenerated character of atoms is thus necessary for the atomists to avoid the problem of the first cause. The atoms always moved, because they always collided, because they always existed. There was no need to initiate the first collision, no need of an outside impulse. In this situation, for the atomists it was obvious that time did not come into being (Aristotle, *Phys*. 251b14–17 = A71). The solution is somewhat evasive and unsatisfactory. It relies on the fact that no first element in an infinite chain of causes extended in the past can be reached. The Cantorian hierarchy of ordinal numbers did not exist yet. But why are atoms moving rather than being at rest? Their eternal rest could have also been explained by an existence of infinite causes that cause that resting state.

Another solution of the fact of the eternal movement of atoms could be that this is their natural state. An ability for motion becomes an inherent property of atoms. There is no outside cause needed to make atoms move because this is their primal state, "a propelling force, an inner impulse, an energy that is in atoms … as elemental impetus for motion."[6] In this, Democritus assumes that is it more natural for matter to move than to rest. Motion thus precedes resting. The problem of energy expenditure does not arise. Atoms can move, therefore they move. However, this solution is too inclusive and does not agree with the testimonies stating that outside force is the source of motion. The solution is only partially true because it appears that for the atomists only the fire and soul atoms, which are spherical, are self-moving, as is also discussed later in the chapter.

Democritus' claim of perpetual motion of matter, although unorthodox, is not entirely different from other Greek theories. For Aristotle, the world is eternal and so is movement of matter in it. Aristotle sees the need for an Unmoved Mover as a prime cause, but this divine Unmoved Mover is a final cause, not an efficient cause. Therefore, the problem of inexhaustible energy also arises in the peripatetic physics, not only in atomism. A real break of atomism from other theories is in the problem of organization of the world and in the emergence of cosmos in the world where there is only random motion of atoms in space. All truly atomistic explanations should be offered in terms of the motion of atoms. All explanations should consist in reducing the explananda to the mechanics of this undirected, uncoordinated, random motion. But the atomistic explanations are not always offered.

The question now is, how does an ordered world emerge out of unorganized matter, out of multitude of atoms moving in the void in an uncoordinated, chaotic fashion? How can order emerge out of chaos? For this absolutely crucial problem there is no satisfactory answer to be found in the extant fragments and in doxography.

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[5] Cicero, *De fin.* 1.6.17 = A56; pseudo-Plutarch, *Strom.* 7 = A39.

[6] Rudolf Löbl, *Demokrits Atome: eine Untersuchung zur Überlieferung und zu einigen wichtigen Lehrstücken in Demokrits Physik* (Bonn: Habelt, 1976), p. 199; Rudolf Löbl, *Demokrits Atomphysik* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1987), p. 115. Primal motion is a primal attribute of matter and thus "atoms are in perpetual motion by themselves," states Wilhelm Capelle, *Die Vorsokratiker* (Stuttgart: Kröner, 1968 [1935]), p. 289. A possibility of "an internal source of mobility" is suggested by C.C.W. Taylor, *The Atomists: Leucippus and Democritus* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), p. 194.

Democritus tacitly relies on some supra-atomic laws which seem to be folded into the concept of necessity.

Aggregates

One important problem the atomists face is the problem of cosmogony. How does the world – in fact, an infinity of worlds – emerge out of the primal complex of randomly moving atoms? The answer is that the atoms begin to move more or less in a circular fashion, forming a swirl so that the larger atoms move toward the center to form the earth, and the lighter atoms move to the outside and form a membrane out of interlocked atoms (DL 9.31–32 = 67A1).[7] "When Democritus says 'a swirl of forms of all kinds was separated off from the totality' [= B167] – how and from what cause he does not say – he seems to bring it into being fortuitously (ἀπὸ ταὐτομάτου) and by chance."[8] The question still remains unanswered. Also, heavy atoms moved toward center and light toward periphery, exactly the opposite of what should happen in the centrifuge that the swirl in effect was.[9] The atomists either did not observe the phenomenon and made their mechanical laws of atoms as a purely theoretical construct, or they did observe it and yet decided to apply its opposite in their cosmogony. In that case, a law of higher level was implicitly invoked, the teleological law that makes heavy atoms move in a direction opposite to that in which they naturally should move. This law is a manifestation of necessity because everything, including the swirl, "comes to be by necessity" (DL 9.44 = A1). Moreover, granting that light atoms moved outward, how is it possible that masses or atoms large enough to form the world began to swirl in unison and change their random motions into organized movement? How is it possible that the atoms on the periphery of the cosmos happen to be so shaped to permit interlocking and thus prevent the world, a highly organized aggregate of atoms, from dispersing? Some laws irreducible to random movement of atoms are needed to explain such cosmic phenomena, and the atomists are just silent on this crucial point of their physico-philosophical system.

The atoms "travel in the void overtaking one another and colliding and some rebounded at random, but others became entangled with one another through the fitting together of shapes, sizes, arrangements and orders, and thus they brought compounds together" (Simplicius, *In De caelo* 242.23–26 = 67A14). All possible shapes of aggregates should be the result of the configuration of constitutive atoms and their shapes. It seems that one atom shape would be sufficient to create any macro shape, just as any shape on the computer screen is generated by a configuration of circular pixels. And if the resolution of the screen were high enough, so that single pixels would be imperceptible, then no jagged lines would be seen. The atomists could argue along similar lines and propose one atom shape, or only a few shapes. But they apparently claim that "there is no more reason for them (atoms) to be of one

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[7] Lafaist, *Dissertation sur la philosophie atomistique*, p. 32, assumes that "atoms move in the void from eternity in circular motion," but cf. pp. 75–77.

[8] Simplicius, *In Phys.* 327.24–26 = A67, similarly, Themistius, *In Phys.* 49.13–16.

[9] Cf. Erwin Schrödinger, *Die Natur und die Griechen. Kosmos und Physik* (Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1956), pp. 100–101.

shape or another" (Simplicius, *In phys.* 28.9–10, = 67A8, 28.25–26 = A38), so there exists an infinity of shapes and thus an infinity of atoms. But it appears that the more important reason for the many atom shapes is the problem of the maintenance of the cohesion of aggregates. If no provision is made for that, there would be difficulty in explaining why some bodies are more durable than others. The crucial force that explains why bodies are held together is the force of interlocking or entanglement. If roughly shaped atoms with hooks are congregated together, then the resulting body may be expected to be durable. The level of durability would depend on the shapes of the atoms and the proportion in which atoms of particular shape participate in the body. This durability would also depend on the sizes of the atoms.

Aristotle stresses the fact that atoms are imperceptible, but, at the same time, maintains that there are all kinds of sizes (*ap.* Simplicius, *In De caelo* 294.33–295.24 = A37). It is possible that he means infinity of different sizes below the level of perceptibility. If "all kinds" of sizes is taken literally, then perceptible atoms would also be possible and, in fact, there are testimonies to the effect that the atomists assumed the existence of large atoms (Eusebius, *Prep. ev.* 14.23.2 = A43), even as large as the world (Aetius 1.12.6 = A47). This may just mean that some worlds can be small in comparison with ours or very large.[10] On account of the principle that like attracts like, small worlds are made out of small atoms and large worlds out of large atoms. The result can be termed the Gulliver effect. Just as Gulliver could be a giant in Lilliput and a dwarf in Brobdingnag, an atom from our world can be as large as a small world, and an atom from a large world can be as large as our world. Given the possibility of infinity of worlds, some of them may be expected to be small, some large. The possibility of infinity of different sizes of atoms can be expected from the application of the same logic as in the case of the infinity of shapes: "there is no more reason for atoms to be one size or another." But certainly the requirement of the infinity of shapes does not imply the infinity of sizes[11] because it is simple to generate an infinity of sizes within the same size boundaries. For example, cutting off a corner from a cube results in a solid with ten corners; cutting off one of the newly obtained corners results in a solid with twelve corners; by continuing the removal of any of the new corners, a solid is generated that has the same length, height, and width as the original cube.

The problem of cohesion of aggregates can be explained to an extent with an infinity of shapes of atoms and the like to like principle, but such explanations are not entirely satisfactory. For example, an individual is composed of atoms of different shapes and yet these atoms constitute a whole that is able to live and function in the world. Why are these particular quantities of atoms of different shapes held together

[10] Charles Mugler, 'Les théories de la vie et de la conscience chez Démocrite', *Revue de Philologie* 33 (1959), pp. 11–15; Peter J. Bicknell, 'Kosmos-sized atoms in Democritus', *Apeiron* 15 (1981), pp. 138–139; Taylor, *The Atomists*, pp. 173–174.

[11] As claimed "logically of course" by Cyril Bailey, *The Greek Atomists and Epicurus* (New York: Russell & Russell, 1964 [1928]), p. 127, because "within the limits of the same size there can only be limited differences of shape." There is thus no need for the principle that "differences between atoms are limited in kind but are unlimited in number," proposed by Pierre-Marie Morel, *Atome et nécessité: Démocrite, Épicure, Lucrèce* (Paris: PUF, 2000), p. 20. Infinity of shapes would imply an infinity of size when an atom is built from minimum parts, as in the Epicurean physics, and when there are minimum units of space, cf. Lucretius 2.481–499.

to make an individual being? An explanation on the atomic level does not seem to be forthcoming. The cohesion has to be explained on the level of conglomerates of atoms which is irreducible to the level of explanation on the level of individual atoms. It is thus correct to state that the atomism needs a law "which, as far as we know, was not explicitly stated … but which has to be assumed as self-evident, namely the law of coherence of what was once combined together."[12] For example, the embryo remains in the uterus so "that the parts of the embryo may be molded in conformity with those of the mother, says Democritus" (Aristotle, *De gen. an.* 740a35–b1 = A144). It is clear that such conformity is unexplainable with the like to like principle confined to the level of atoms, but similarity of form of entire compounds has to be taken into account, which exceeds the limits of the strict atomist principle of explaining everything in terms of atoms and the void.[13] Moreover, if Aristotle conveys Democritus' view of the subject of the development of the embryo correctly, the view has a clear teleological component which can hardly be squared with an orthodox atomism.

There is also a problem with an explanation of the phenomenon of life. Life is characterized by the ability of self-motion, and the latter by the presence of the soul as the source of motion (Aristotle, *De anima* 406b15 = A104). The soul "is originating motion due to the fineness of particles and [their] shape" (405a10–11 = A101) and thus it is made out of atoms that are most mobile, that is, spheres (405a12). These are also atoms of fire, and thus the soul is fire.[14] Fire atoms are most subtle and "most [= closest to] incorporeal" (Aristotle *De anima* 405a6–7 = A101). They need to be most subtle because they permeate the entire body (409b2–3 = A104a) so that one atom of the body has one atom of the soul next to it (Lucretius 3.370–374 = A108). Also, fire "is moved and moves in all the other" atoms (Aristotle, *De anima* 405a7 = A101). And so it is with the soul which is a configuration of "the indivisible spheres because they are such that they never remain still and they drag along with them and move the whole body" (406b20–22 = A104). The soul can thus truly be the source of motion if this motion is inherent to the soul, if the atoms constituting the soul remain in motion even in the absence of the outside motion. They can be impacted by other atoms, including non-fire atoms, but this is not the primary source of their motion. Therefore, if there were an isolated fire atom in the void, it still could move without being propelled by any outside source. A non-spherical atom, on the other hand, when isolated, would eventually cease its motion and remain still until another atom impacts it and initiates its motion. Fire atoms thus occupy a special

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[12] Jaap Mansfeld, *Die Vorsokratiker* (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1986), vol. 2, p. 237; Ulrike Hirsch, 'War Demokrits Weltbild mechanistisch und antiteleologisch?', *Phronesis* 35 (1990), p. 240; an existence of a fundamental attractive force "which holds together atoms of different shapes in an atomic aggregate" is mentioned by Taylor, *The atomists*, p. 194.

[13] Hirsch, 'War Demokrits Weltbild mechanistisch und antiteleologisch?', p. 241.

[14] 404a1; Aetius 4.3.7 = 67A28. Aristotle even says that "the soul and heat are identical, being the primary configurations of spheres" (*De resp.* 472a4–5 = A106); he calls these atoms mind and soul (472a8); and so soul and mind are the same thing (*De anima* 404a27,31, 405a9 = A101). For this reason, it is true that the soul "is at the same time the source of life and the source of thought," Lambros Couloubaritsis, 'Considérations sur la notion de *Noûs* chez Démocrite', *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie* 62 (1980), p. 140.

position in Democritus' physics, because this physics also intends to be biology and psychology. The fire atoms have a primary attribute lacking in other atoms, namely self-motion. And fire, being what it is – fire, that is hot – has heat as a primary attribute (Aristotle, *De gen. et corr.* 326a4–5 = 67A7).

It is interesting to see the problem of death in the light of the special status of the soul atoms in atomism. The atomists say that the soul is mortal and perishes with the body (Aetius 4.7.4 = A109) and "some people, not knowing of the dissolution of mortal nature, but conscious of their evil-doing in life, trouble their time of life with terrors and fears, inventing false tales about the time after the end [of life]" (Stobaeus 4.52.40 = B297; 4.34.62). But if soul atoms are self-moving, it is unclear why the soul should be mortal. If life is motion, then by definition the soul should be immortal. The explanation the atomists can give is that, after death, the soul does not maintain its coherence. During life, the soul is interspersed in the body to stay together, and only in this physical context does hyper-motion of soul atoms become beneficial. By breathing in spherical atoms, the soul is prevented from escaping the body (Aristotle, *De resp.* 472a8–10 = A106), that is, the pressure of the outside soul atoms keeps the soul inside the body. But at death, the soul does not leave the body in its entirety, but, hindered by the atoms of the body, the soul is leaving the body one portion at a time. Even after major signs of life cease to be visible, portions of the soul are still trapped by the roughness of other atoms which is manifested by "growth of nails and hair for some time after burial" (Tertullian, *De anima* 51.2 = A160) and by warmth and perception of the corpses, although most of the soul is breathed out (Aetius 4.4.7 = A117). In this way, the soul's integrity – and thus the integrity of the personality it carries – is lost. The soul, because of its connection with the body, cannot maintain its wholeness. However, the integrity of the aggregate of spherical atoms is easier to maintain for thin layers of atoms (*eidola*), as will be argued later.

Another area in which an explanation on the atomic level is insufficient is the phenomenon of vision. According to the atomists, "seeing occurs through the penetration of εἴδωλα" (Aetius 4.13.1 = 67A29). They say that "*eidola* flow off, similar in form to that from which they flow …, and fall into the eyes of the perceivers, and thus seeing occurs" (Alexander, *In De sensu* 24.19–21 = 67A29). Because the *eidola* are "similar in form" to the source, they can be envisioned as membranes or films peeled off from the surface of the source which traverse the space between their source and the perceiver to reach the eyes of the latter.[15]

Eidola are aggregates of atoms which have to preserve the form of the source from the very inception, when an *eidolon* separates from the source, throughout its travel in the space to the eye. Ancient commentators observed that there may be some distortion occurring during that travel. There is no problem if the *eidola* "have a swift, unobstructed passage through smooth air. But in autumn the trees shed their leaves into the air, making it very rough and uneven, which distorts and deflects the *eidola* in all sorts of way and weakens and obstructs their clarity" (Plutarch, *Quaest. conv.* 735c = A77). What is remarkable is not that distortions

[15] An *eidolon* is "a sort of thin atomic film," Bailey, *The Greek Atomists and Epicurus*, p. 104, "rather like a snake sloughing off its skin," Peter J. Bicknell, 'The seat of the mind in Democritus', *Eranos* 66 (1968), p. 11.

occur but that *eidola* can reach an eye undistorted. Any impurity of the air can easily undermine the consistency of *eidola*. But more remarkably, the air is never pure. *Eidola* are emitted from any object in any direction. Therefore, the air is constantly filled with *eidola* traveling in all directions and constantly penetrating one another. In each moment each *eidolon* is penetrating other *eidola*, that is, there is constant interference, and yet, this delicate, thin membrane preserves its consistency to convey to an eye the likeness of its source. It is simply impossible that reliance on random motion of atoms can explain the maintenance of the cohesion of *eidola* in their travels. A physical law of higher, supra-atomic level is indispensable to make such an explanation believable.

To be able to see, if not a continuous stream,[16] then a sequence of *eidola* in rapid succession must be received to visually perceive anything and thus "seeing does not occur through the impact of a single *eidolon*" (Alexander, *De anima* 2.136.17). This is clear in the case of moving objects. To see the motion, the *eidola* of the objects in different positions have to reach the eye to observe the motion. For motion to be observed correctly, the rate of the arriving *eidola* has to be high enough. Today we would say that the frequency of images has to be at least twice the frequency of change in the object (according to the so-called sampling theorem).[17] Otherwise, a misleading effect would be produced like in a movie with its 24 frames (*eidola*) per second when the wheel of a fast-moving car seems to turn backwards. One difficulty is that the proper rate of emitting *eidola* cannot be explained in terms of random movements of atoms. There must be a supra-atomic law that controls this rate, otherwise vision would seldom be possible.

Also, it is unclear how a body can recompense the loss of atoms emitted in *eidola*. First, emission has to be made in all directions because the body does not 'know' where an eye can be to perceive it; but even if *eidola* are emitted in a finite number of directions, this number has to be very high not to miss any possible eye in a relatively close distance. Moreover, the rate of emission of *eidola* in one direction only has to be high to enable perception of motion. It seems, therefore, that a body can very quickly dissolve into a stream of *eidola*, thereby ceasing to exist. Even with very thin films of atoms such a prospect seems inevitable. In living bodies, the loss of atoms can be recompensed by food intake. But there is really no explanation for preservation of inanimate objects. How can a stone make up for the loss of emitted atoms? If we can rely on a random motion of atoms, then no plausible explanation can be offered: we would have to say that atoms randomly join the stone so that the stone remains the stone. For one thing, could atoms randomly be attached to the stone so that its shape remains unchanged?

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[16] As suggested by Alexander, *In De sensu* 56.12 = 67A29 and explicitly required by Epicurus (DL 10.48).

[17] Adam Drozdek, *Elements of Data Compression* (Pacific Grove: Brooks/Cole, 2002), pp. 76, 190–191.

Necessity

The supra-atomic laws indispensable for the coherence of the atomistic system and irreducible to atomic level are nowhere explicitly mentioned by the atomists, but a supposition can be ventured that they are implicit in the concept of necessity.

Necessity is of universal importance. "Democritus neglects the final cause, reducing to necessity all the operations of nature" (Aristotle, *De gen. anim.* 789b2–3 = A66),[18] everything happens of necessity (Cicero, *De fato* 10.23; DL 9.45 = A33), "everything happens by fate, in such a way that fate has the force of necessity" (Cicero, *De fato* 17.39 = A66), "everything happens by necessity, which is the same as fate, justice, providence, and the creator" (Aetius 1.25.3 = 28A32). Necessity is omnipresent. Nothing seems to happen without its impact.

Democritus wants necessity to be a mechanical principle, different from providence and an overseeing intelligence that is the reason for what happens in the world. This is to be a mechanical force, blind and non-planning, devoid of intentionality, and yet responsible for everything that is, including intentionality and the ability to make plans.

Necessity is said to be "an irresistible force bringing about that things have to happen,"[19] which can be taken to mean that explanations in atomism have to be made in terms of three terms: atoms, the void, and necessity. But what is necessity is far from clear. One interpretation implants necessity in atoms: "For Democritus *ananke* is in the *hyle* of atoms as the primeval ground of perpetual motion which is denoted with peripatetic descriptions as tendency to motion, impulse to motion, and weight."[20] But this still tells us very little about the nature of necessity, only about where it can be found.[21] Already the ancients complained about the lack of clarity on that point. The world is created, evolves, and is destroyed "according to some necessity which Leucippus does not explain."[22]

Necessity, Aetius testifies, is an "impact and motion and a blow of matter,"[23] which is considered to be an expression of the universality of causality.[24] Consequently, Democritus protested, according to Aristotle and Eudemus, against the existence of

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[18] And thus it is true that "the Democritean physics consists in always identifying the presence of necessity," Morel, *Atome et nécessité*, p. 36.

[19] Taylor, *The Atomists*, p. 190.

[20] Löbl, *Demokrits Atome*, p. 198; Löbl, *Demokrits Atomphysik*, p. 114.

[21] The explanation that necessity means that "the physical process as a whole happens necessarily," Paul Cartledge, *Democritus* (New York: Routledge, 1999), p. 19, is hardly illuminating. Only slightly better is an *idem per idem* definition that *ananke*, that is, necessity is "a natural force which with compelling necessity brings atoms to swirling motion and is the cause of all coming-to-be," Wilhelm Gundel, *Beiträge zur Entwickelungsgeschichte der Begriffe Ananke und Heimarmene* (Gießen: Lange, 1914), p. 15.

[22] DL 9.33 = 67A1; Hippolytus, *Ref.* 1.12.2 = 67A10.

[23] 1.26.2 = A66. Matter, that is, atoms; Democritus seems not to have used the concept of matter (*hyle*), Morel, *Atome et nécessité*, p. 23 note 2.

[24] Octave Hamelin, *Les Philosophes presocratiques* (Strasbourg 1978), p. 186; Morel, *Atome et nécessité*, p. 17.

chance.[25] But if necessity is an expression of the fact that nothing is uncaused, then nothing is really gained by this insight: atoms move eternally and cause motion by impacting each other (whether propelled by inner force or because the chain of causes is infinite and there is no need to look for the first cause) and thus the presence of necessity (causality) is rooted in the fact of this motion. Motion is primary, causality is secondary. Efficient causes are results of motion of atoms and so necessity is reduced to motion.

It seems that the concept of a necessary law includes the supra-atomic law such as the law of cohesion of aggregates. According to the atomists, substances (aggregates) "remain together for some time by dovetailing and interlocking of the bodies [= atoms]." The atoms "stay together until some stronger necessity, approaching from the surroundings, shakes them apart and disperses them" (Simplicius, *In De caelo* 295.19–20 = A37). There is thus a weaker necessity which keeps the aggregates together, which is the law of cohesion of aggregates. The all-present necessity can thus manifest itself as the force that maintains the unity of bodies, but also as a force that disrupts this unity.[26]

As indicated above, the ancient doxographers already complained about the fact that the atomists really did not explain the cosmogonic mechanism, in particular, the emergence of the swirl. But it can be claimed that the swirl is only a means through which the force of necessity is released, that is, necessity is a cause of the swirl.[27] Necessity is a force that steers the motion of atoms and thus creates the world.[28] This does not explain the swirl mechanism by much, but it points to the omnipresent necessity as the underlying principle, even if the nature of the principle is not altogether clear.

But there is more: necessity embraces more than physical laws.

It seems that the atomists' concept of necessity attempts to cover what was phrased explicitly by others in overtly theological terms. In particular, the teleological aspect can be found in most Greek philosophers. Anaximander maintained that the divine *Apeiron* steers all things (12A15) and so does a goddess of Parmenides' astronomical system (28A37) and the One, the Logos, of Heraclitus (22B41, B64). The Holy *Phren* of Empedocles also governs the universe, as does Anaxagoras' *Nous*. Moreover, in traditional religion, Zeus rules over gods and men and influences events, even from

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[25] *Phys*. 195b36–196a3, Simplicius, *In Phys.* 330.14–20 = A68; Curt L. von Peter, *Das Problem des Zufalls in der griechischen Philosophie* (Berlin: Simion, 1909), p. 21. This means that chance is an epistemological rather than an ontological concept since chance is simply an "unpredictable result of necessity", R. Ferwerda, 'Democritus and Plato', *Mnemosyne* 25 (1972), p. 367, and "not knowing the causes," Kayser, *Die Urbewegung der Atome bei Leukipp und Demokrit*, p. 100, also p. 26, and thus, ontologically, chance is but another name for necessity, Morel, *Atome et nécessité*, p. 29, its sobriquet, Jean Salem, *L'Atomisme antique: Démocrite, Épicure, Lucrèce* (Paris: Livre de poche, 1997), pp. 24–27. "Chance *is* necessity," state today's physicists, David Bohm and F. David Peat, *Science, Order, and Creativity* (Toronto: Bantam Books, 1987), p. 133.

[26] Cf. Taylor, *The Atomists*, pp. 194–195.

[27] Heinz Schreckenberg, *Ananke: Untersuchungen zur Geschichte des Wortgebrauchs* (Munich: Beck, 1964), p. 115.

[28] Ibid., p. 122.

afar, through his insight (*Il*. 2.27, 15.242, 16.102, *Od*. 24.164, 174). Democritus attempts to cut off this side of reality by considering the universe to be governed by an ateleological force of necessity. If there is an appearance of purpose anywhere in the universe, necessity is called for as a mechanical cause.[29] By definition, necessity is pronounced to be mechanical and purpose-free and thus, by a reference to its activity, any appearance of purpose is automatically dismissed. Why is the universe – in fact, an infinity of universes – harmonious, organized, with a multitude of well-fitted parts and entities? Because necessity did it. How was a blind force capable of accomplishing it? Because it accomplished it. The answer to the fundamental question of the existence of purpose is given thus in the crudest non-philosophical manner by simply pronouncing that because necessity is a mechanical force and because there is no purposeful force in the universe, then any purpose is the result of the workings of the blind force. Arguably the most important part and function of any philosophical system is non-existent. Theological thinking is present in the non-theological system in the form of the *fiat*: order arising out of chaos is considered to be a fact which is not explained and, in effect, the act of necessity to convert chaos into order is a divine act in the midst of the swarming atoms. Necessity is an atomistic, nondivine divinity capable of bringing ordered and harmonious results out of disharmonious clouds of chaotically moving atoms. It is a blind force that produces what intelligible divinities of other philosophers brought into being, a force that is stripped of the divine status and yet by terminological *fiat*, brings results that only divinities were able to perform. And because the way it is accomplished is out of reach to the human mind, it is left unanalyzed, obscure, existing but unexplainable.

The gods

Although the crucial theological component of atomism is concealed in the concept of necessity, there is an explicit token theology to be found in this system.

Gods are "gigantic *eidola* in human shape" (SE 9.42), "difficult to destroy but not indestructible."[30] Are divine *eidola* gods themselves or images of gods that exist elsewhere? Already Cicero indicated that Democritus is unclear about that because he counts at one time among the gods "wandering images," at another time, "the world of nature which emits and dispatches them" (*ND* 1.29). However, Sextus Empiricus believes that for Democritus there are no gods beside the *eidola* (9.19; cf. Augustine, *Ep.* 118.27).

It is possible to interpret differences in statements concerning the nature of the gods by the fact that *eidola* can be understood as images of something or entities independent of any source.[31] However, it seems more natural to retain only the

[29] Newton's "theological subterfuge" of attributing the organization of the world to "a divine organizer" is dismissed by Szent-Györgyi "by locating the organizer within the cosmic system from the beginning," Lewis Mumford, *The Pentagon of Power* (New York: Harcourt-Brace-Jovanovich, 1970), p. 87.

[30] SE 9.19 = B166, Cicero, *ND* 1.29 = A74.

[31] Donal McGibbon, 'The religious thought of Democritus', *Hermes* 93 (1965), p. 392, even distinguishes four meanings of the *eidolon*.

first meaning, namely, *eidola* as *eidola* of something. The *eidolon* is a technical term in the atomists' epistemology, and it seems to preserve this epistemological meaning in the atomist theology. Moreover, already for Homer the *eidolon* was a dependent entity. In the *Odyssey*, Pallas Athena sends to Penelope an *eidolon* of her sister. The *eidolon* penetrates the door and appears to Penelope in her dream (4.795–841). Also, Heracles' *eidolon* is in Hades, whereas Heracles himself is in Olympus among the gods (11.601–602). *Eidolon* thus is a phantom, a double. The *eidolon* can act autonomously, but its emergence is dependent upon an original. As possibly an autonomous entity, the *eidolon* can exist after the original existence expires. If its autonomy is pressed too hard, then some paradoxes may arise. For example, it is theoretically possible to claim that Zeus, in his inscrutable wisdom, shaped the *eidolon* of Heracles before Heracles was conceived in Alcmena's womb, but, still, the main characteristic of the *eidolon* is present, namely its dependence on the source, although atemporally.

A testimony that "Democritus conjectures that the gods came into being with the rest of the fire in the heavens" (Tertullian, *Ad nationes* 2.2.18 = A74) suggests that the Democritean gods are made from fire. This supposition is reinforced by Cicero's statement that, for Democritus, "the gods are elements of mind (*principia mentis*)" (*ND* 1.120 = A74) and an opinion that, for him, "god is mind in spherical fire" (Aetius 1.7.16 = A74). And because the mind is made from fire atoms, the gods are also composed of atoms of fire.[32]

The autonomy of the *eidola* considered to be the gods is caused by their fiery composition: the atoms of fire are the spherical atoms capable of self-motion. But the source of such *eidola* is another matter. The source, potentially, can be any object. When *eidola* of an object traverse though the space between the object and a man, they can become purified by the atmosphere and other *eidola* through which they have to penetrate to reach the man. The atmosphere and the encountered *eidola* form a filter that gradually eliminates non-spherical atoms so that a thinned out *eidolon* remains that may become purer and purer as it passes through its surroundings. The spherical atoms remain because they can penetrate anything, and so eventually, a normal *eidolon* may become an *eidolon* composed primarily or even solely of spherical atoms and, as such, it becomes more and more autonomous. Being autonomous, it may reach places where normal *eidola* would not reach because they cannot penetrate everything unobstructed. And so, an *eidolon* of a man may reach another city, another continent, or another world, for that matter, and as such appear divine and miraculous because it is apparently not connected to any source, which can be confirmed by approaching the place from which the *eidolon* supposedly originated or confirmed with senses other than vision. Because humans are beings saturated with fire atoms in the fullest, it is primarily human *eidola* that may become so purified and yet coherent enough to convey human shape. There is little chance that this would happen with the *eidolon* of a stone, because stone has very few fire atoms, if any, and thus the purified *eidolon* of a stone would be too weak to be visible.

However, because of Democritus' conjecture that "the gods came into being with the rest of the fire in the heavens," it seems that his theology also includes real gods.

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[32] Cf. Bailey, *The Greek Atomists and Epicurus*, p. 177; Taylor, *The Atomists*, p. 214.

These gods are not dwelling in some supraterranean sphere as the Epicurean gods, detached from the affairs of the world, but they are close to earth and interested in human life: "Only those are loved by the gods, to whom wrongdoing is hateful."[33] The gods are also affecting human lives by giving "all good things to men, before and now" (Stobaeus 2.9.4 = B175). The gods can predict the future and share this knowledge with people.[34] Also, men can pray to the gods. True, it is stated that "people ask the gods for health in their prayers, but do not realize that the control of their health lies with them; through lack of self-control they act in opposition to it and so themselves betray their health to their desires" (Stobaeus 3.18.30 = B234). But also, the statement that "the gods give all good things to men, before and now" is followed with the pronouncement that "things that are bad and harmful and useless, neither before nor now do the gods bestow [these things] on men, but they run into them [themselves] through blindness of mind and ignorance." Prayer must be a prayer of a clear mind, enlightened by wisdom, of a man in control of his life. Prayer can be effective if man cooperates with the gods. In a disorderly life, even good gifts of the gods can be wasted and even turned into something unpalatable.

Although "the gods give all good things to men," not all gods do that, because, in addition to beneficial gods, there are also harmful gods; for this reason, Democritus is said to have "prayed to encounter propitious *eidola*."[35] These malevolent *eidola*-gods can be the *eidola* stemming not from the genuine gods, but from non-divine beings sufficiently purified to pass for the gods. Being derived from non-perfect beings, they retain their imperfection, including negative traits of the source – for example, malice, if they stem from a malicious person. The autonomy of the *eidola* and the interference of the surroundings and of other *eidola* may adversely affect the configuration of the incoming fiery *eidola*. Democritus prays – or just wishes[36] – that such *eidola* do not reach him.[37]

The genuine gods are not necessarily the gods of traditional mythology. From the very inception of Greek philosophy, the gods of mythology were replaced by divinities purified from unpalatable features such as their quarrelsomeness, jealousy, vindictiveness, overindulgence, and so on. Beginning as early as Xenophanes, the anthropomorphic character of the gods is explicitly rejected. It is thus possible that Democritus has only two genuine divinities, Punishment and Reward, as reported by Pliny (2.14 = A76). Anthropomorphic divinities can be explained as purified *eidola* of

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[33] Stobaeus 3.9.30 = B217. Possibly, also the saying considered uncertain by Diels and Kranz and listed after B112 can be quoted here: "If one believes that the gods keep their eye on everything, one will not go wrong neither in secret or openly" (Democrates 80).

[34] SE 9.19. Their prophetic abilities may be due to their "superhuman but natural ability to foresee and to calculate what must happen in accordance with the laws of necessity," Hans Regnéll, *Ancient Views on the Nature of Life. Three studies in the philosophies of the atomists, Plato and Aristotle* (Lund: Gleerup, 1967), p. 209.

[35] SE 9.19; Cicero, *ND* 1.120 = A74; Plutarch, *De defectu orac.* 419a.

[36] Herbert Eisenberger, 'Demokrits Vorstellung vom Sein und Wirken der Götter', *Rheinisches Museum* 113 (1970), p. 152.

[37] A supposition is possible that because Epicureans later "cultivated a kind of religious piety," some form of religious life can be expected also in Democritus, Regnéll, *Ancient Views on the Nature of Life*, p. 213.

ordinary beings that the uninformed take for genuine divinities. But even the divine character of the two genuine divinities can be doubted because they are physical beings prone to the same disintegration process as any other physical being, although they may exist much longer than anything else. However, there is one element in the Democritean philosophy that always remains the same and is imperishable, namely, the law of necessity. This is where the true theology lies. Necessity, in effect, is God of philosophers, the summary of what was considered divine by other philosophers. Necessity is responsible for the order existing anywhere in any world; necessity is responsible for the emergence of the worlds and all beings within these worlds and their preservation. Necessity does not create atoms, but infuses them with order. It is eternal and immutable. It is responsible for the emergence of life, but itself, necessity is above life. By configuring fire atoms into souls and minds, necessity is the source of intelligibility in the world. Configuring other atoms into non-rational bodies, it is the source of order of beings devoid of reason. As such, necessity is above intelligibility and its lack. Necessity is the divinity of the most sublime kind, the divinity whose divine character is not recognized explicitly by Democritus, but the divinity that requires more belief to recognize than the divinity of other Greek philosophers. Atomism striving for non-religious explanations is as firmly rooted in theological foundations as philosophies that do not shun a connection with theology. Renunciation of theology by the atomists is thus largely unsuccessful and based on verbal rejection of theological ties. In reality, it stems from theology and crumbles without it.

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Chapter 9

Rationalization of Religion

The mid-fifth century BC marks the beginning of a new type of philosophy in Athens. The old philosophy of nature was of tangential interest only. The primary philosophical interest of the times was in practical matters, in social issues with a relativistic bent. Grand metaphysical issues were set aside. The expansion of Athenian democracy required skills that would prepare the young for participation in public life. The role of teachers was fulfilled by the Sophists although the Sophists did not form a uniform school. They disagreed among themselves about curriculum (see, for instance, Protagoras' criticism of other Sophists voiced in Plato's *Protagoras* 318de). They charged a fee for their educational services and concentrated on higher learning.[1] They taught rhetoric and the intricacies of political life. However, an important novelty was the idea that virtue can be taught. The source of knowledge of virtue, however, was not traditional religion, among other things, but the experience and knowledge of sages and teachers. With Xenophanes, they criticized traditional religion, but did not propose any other religious system in its place. Religion was considered a human invention, socially desirable and useful but of little metaphysical significance.

Protagoras

It is reported that Protagoras began one of his works, *On the gods*, with a strong, even provocative statement: "About the gods, I am not able to know whether they exist or do not exist, nor what they are like in form; for the things preventing knowledge are many: the obscurity [of the subject] and the brevity of human life" (DL 9.51 + Eusebius, *Praep. ev.* 14.3.7 = B4).[2] The statement appeared so controversial to his contemporaries that Protagoras was accused of atheism and his book was publicly burned. Regrettably, only this one sentence survived from the work, and it is difficult to say how the argument developed afterwards. But judging just from this fragment, the accusation of atheism is far too strong. In it, Protagoras does not make an ontological but an epistemological statement. He does not *know* whether the gods exist or not, which does not mean that he denies their existence. He pronounces his inability to have definite knowledge concerning this theological issue, but he leaves open a possibility that some positive pronouncements about the gods can be made. However, these pronouncements would not qualify as knowledge. Not knowing how it is with

[1] On the role of the Sophists in Greek education, see William Boyd and Edmund J. King, *The History of Western Education* (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1973), pp. 17, 21–24; Frederick A.G. Beck, *Greek Education* (London: Methuen, 1964), pp. 147–150.

[2] Adam Drozdek, 'Protagoras and instrumentality of religion', *L'Antiquité Classique* 74 (2005), pp. 41–50.

the existence of the gods, Protagoras does not know what they look like, either. It is obvious that in making this statement Protagoras relies on the popular concept of the gods, in particular, their immortality. This basic fact about the gods seems to be reflected in the reason Protagoras gives for his lack of knowledge about the gods, which is brevity of human life.[3] Had humans lived longer, would they have been able to acquire some knowledge about the gods? How long would be long enough? Any finite length of human existence would be vanishingly small in comparison with the infinity of the existence of the gods. On the other hand, why this would be an issue?[4] Protagoras probably would agree that the sky and the sea are incomparably older than any of the humans and yet humans accumulated a great deal of positive knowledge about meteorology, astronomy, navigation, and the like to be able to use this knowledge in everyday life. Would it be possible to acquire at least partial knowledge about the gods through generations of theological investigations? Presumably, problems like this are addressed by Protagoras later in his book.

Besides *On the gods*, Protagoras wrote at least one other treatise that discussed religious matters, *On those in Hades*. This means that Protagoras was seriously interested in the problem of religion and addressed the obvious fact that religion exists and is a potent psychological and social force. Because none of these works survived, his views on religion may be gleaned from Plato's account of Protagoras' speech presented in the *Protagoras*. Protagoras' speech in the *Protagoras* has two parts, a myth and an argument. In a mythical account of the genesis of man, Protagoras states that gods existed first and they molded living beings from physical materials and then Epimetheus and Prometheus were put in charge of giving each of these beings proper abilities (swiftness, hides, claws, and so on). Epimetheus did the job at first by himself, but he ran out of abilities so nothing was left for men. Therefore, Prometheus stole wisdom from Athena and fire from Hephaestus. So it appears that absentmindedness of Epimetheus, "who was not very wise" (321b), was beneficial for humans since, otherwise, they would be just as other animals, made fit to live and survive through natural endowment only. Through Prometheus' sense of responsibility, the job is completed by giving men the divine attribute of wisdom and the no less divine gift of fire. Prometheus steals what is divine and gives it to men, thereby elevating them above the animal level. From the perspective of the gods, the lack of scruples in resorting to a rather nondivine stratagem was not wise, either, for which Prometheus had to pay dearly. It is just ironic – the irony probably intended by Protagoras – that through unwise handling by a god of the distribution of abilities and unwise handling by another god of the acquirement of the gifts, divine wisdom becomes man's endowment. Humans will later be able to justly prosecute theft and other crimes because of the gift of wisdom that was stolen and handed to them.

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[3] Mirella Carbonara Naddei, 'L'agnosticismo religioso di Protagora', *Sophia* 37 (1969), pp. 94–95, proposed a somewhat strained interpretation of brevity (of human life) as the limitation of human cognitive abilities, "intrinsic limitation of human rationality."

[4] It may very well be that the reference to short life simply means that "it does not make sense to wait for a confirming personal experience," as proposed by Jaap Mansfeld**,** **'**Protagoras on epistemological obstacles and persons', in G.B. Kerferd (ed.), *The Sophists and Their Legacy* (Wiesbaden: Steiner, 1981), p. 42.

An ironic treatment of the gods in Protagoras' myth indicates that the myth is just a myth, a story not to be treated in all seriousness when it comes to the matter of the divine.[5] If the story is considered nonmythically, it seems that Protagoras conveys a view that humans are just a lucky accident of some unspecified natural development. They are not simply animals because of the wisdom they posses and the ability – an art – of handling fire. Other animals are truly unreasoning beings (τὰ ἄλογα, 321c), but humans, as much as they are rational, are divine – they have "kinship with the god" (322a). Humans recognized that kinship from the very beginning, and the first act of the human race was to worship the gods by erecting altars and making images of the gods. Humans, rational beings, are thus naturally religious beings, endowed with a religious instinct that needs to be exercised properly. Whether the universal existence of this instinct can be considered a proof for the existence of the divine is another matter. Protagoras' agnosticism would not be irreconcilable with using it as a weak proof. Others used it as a strong proof, to mention only the Stoics.

The fact that religious instinct is primary in humans can be seen from the order in which other manifestations of wisdom appeared. Protagoras says that *after* worship of the gods, humans developed language, building houses, making cloths, and processing foods.[6] The first acts of wisdom in humans are very specific to humans: religion and language.

With wisdom and fire and the skills developed through them, humans were at a disadvantage. To enable their survival, the intervention of Zeus himself was required to endow them with a gift that would lead to the development of civilization: the gift of justice and respect/shame (αἰδώς). These two gifts were a glue of sorts that transformed scattered groups and families into *polis* societies so that, through coordinated group activity, humans were able to screen themselves from the danger of the animal world. Natural human gifts were insufficient to help small groups blend into societies. The divine on the level of an individual had to be supplemented by the divine on the societal level.

Rationality, if only practical, makes humans human. However, rationality by itself is insufficient for human survival. There is the next level, namely morality. Rational dimension is historically followed by the moral dimension, and the latter is what makes humans fully human. Through the development of full humanity, through the development of moral sense, scattered human groups can coalesce and form lasting groups powerful enough to repel outside dangers. Morality and moral behavior are the source of strength. Humans are human only partially through

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[5] There is an opinion that Protagoras' myth is really an expression of true piety, M. Louis, *Doctrines religieuses des philosophes grecs* (Paris: Lethielleux, 1909), p. 47.

[6] It is not at all obvious that Protagoras meant here not temporal succession, but an indication of importance, as suggested by Carl W. Müller, 'Protagoras über die Götter', *Hermes* 95 (1967), p. 143 note 2; Hermann Sauppe, Commentaries, in Plato, *Protagoras* (Boston: Ginn, 1889), p. 67. But even if such interpretation of the "first-then" clause is accepted, the pre-eminence of religion remains uncontested, cf. C.C.W. Taylor, Commentaries, in Plato, *Protagoras* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976), p. 84. Olof Gigon, 'Studien zu Platons *Protagoras*', in *Phyllobolia* (Basel: Schwabe, 1946), p. 127, says that religion and language constitute a "fixed pair" as exemplified in Lucretius 5.71–75. However, Lucretius clearly considers development of religion to follow emergence of language, so Protagoras' pair is not too fixed for Lucretius.

rationality.[7] Rationality is a necessary prerequisite of morality, a vehicle through which morality can be developed.[8]

In the argument that follows the myth, Protagoras says that "the virtue of a man" (ἀνδρὸς ἀρετή) must be common to all citizens and that the virtue encompasses justice, moderation (σωφροσύνη), and holiness (ὅσιον εἰναι, 325a). Holiness, understood as "showing the proper attitude (sc. in thought, word, and action) towards the gods,"[9] is an indispensable element that assures the proper functioning of society. *Andros aretē* is not immutable and not equally strong in all humans and thus has to be nurtured, particularly by the educational process (325d). It is obvious for Protagoras that all citizens ought to be religious and moral, hopefully, in their inner disposition, but at least in their outward behavior. Religion is considered in the argument purely as part of social engineering. There is no interest in, no discussion of the validity of the religious claims. The city functions properly due in large part to the exercise of religious practices.

The discussed views on religion have to be confronted with the *homo mensura* statement with which the name of Protagoras is identified much more closely than with the agnosticism of fr. B4. Protagoras says that "man is a measure of all things, of those that are that they are, and of those that are not that they are not" (Plato, *Theaet.* 152a = B1). As expressed by Socrates, the statement means, "as each thing appears to me so it is to me, and as it appears to you, so it is to you" (152a, *Crat.* 385e). However, this does not lead to complete epistemological anarchy. The Sophist goal is to be useful to the city and the city's opinion prevails over the view of an individual citizen. For "whatever seems just and right to a city is really just and right to it so long as it believes to be so" (*Theaet.* 177d, 167c). When individuals are taken separately, their opinions and views are on a par. There is democracy in holding opinions. But when common good and common interest is taken into account, there are erroneous opinions if they are in conflict with the views that may assure the preservation of the city. Therefore, religious underpinnings of the laws and morals of the city are considered to be true according to how much they assure the stability of the city. Religion is thus relative, but not totally arbitrary. There is an element of objectivity in justifying the validity of religious views, or any views, for that matter. Utilitarianism on the social level must involve some objectivity because seldom, if ever, can views dominant in a society be maintained, at least, in the long run, on the whim of an individual – be it a charismatic leader or tyrannical dictator. Historical situation, sociological conditions, political situation, environmental setting, and other factors are, most of the time, beyond the control of single individuals, and these conditions determine what ideology will be dominant

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[7] A similar view can be detected in the statement that the relation between the rulers and the ruled is determined by "reasonableness directed by αἰδώς and δίκη, embodied in morals and laws," D. Loenen, *Protagoras and the Greek Community* (Amsterdam, 1942), pp. 18–19.

[8] It is, therefore, true that *sophia* is "an obvious prerequisite" of political expertise, although not mentioned explicitly by Protagoras, but it does not seem correct to see society as merely a result of "a long process of trial and error," as proposed by Taylor, Commentaries, pp. 81, 82. Also, as stressed by Dietz, for the first time in the European history of ideas, knowledge is explicitly distinguished from ethics and social behavior, Karl-Martin Dietz, *Protagoras von Abdera* (Bonn: Habelt, 1976), p. 126.

[9] Taylor, Commentaries, p. 96; Loenen, *Protagoras and the Greek Community*, p. 29.

in the city. In this way, "man" from the *homo mensura* statement can be understood as referring to humanity or society as a whole.[10]

The theological problems are rejected outright from any discussion by Protagoras (*Theaet.* 162e). As mentioned, it may be a token of humble admission of the limitation of human cognitive abilities. However, in view of the fact that Protagoras is a teacher, and a paid teacher at that, it is rather curious that he does not want to discuss and teach problems that are so very important for many, and probably most if not all, citizens. He was not uninterested in ontological problems when he discussed the problem of the unity of being (Porphyry, *ap.* Eusebius, *Praep. ev.* 10.3.25 = B2), but his view on theology seems to indicate that ontology was treated in the positivistic spirit as something to be left aside, and the thrust of his intellectual activity was devoted to the problems of politics, ethics, and pedagogy, in which theology was treated purely instrumentally. Because we cannot reach the essence of the divine, religious issues should be resolved in the *homo mensura* fashion with the group interest as a primary objective in mind. If a city judges that veneration of Athena is a cohesive social element, Athena should be revered. If Dionysian revelries are such an element, citizens should give themselves to the excesses of the cult because, presumably, this is in the best interest of the city. If familial bonds are strengthened by having wives accompany their dead husbands on their afterlife voyage (as in the Indian rite of *sati*), this should be done. It would thus be difficult to disagree with the somewhat harsh statement that "Protagoras' man-measure principle, then, commits him to the view that any action can be just if a person or community thinks so, even if it involves blatant disregard for the rights of others."[11]

Prodicus

Prodicus, a younger contemporary of Protagoras, does not have epistemological scruples in stating something about the gods, namely that they do not exist, and he brings the phenomenon of religion much closer to earth, in fact, quite literally. Prodicus "derived all of mankind's sacrifices and mysteries and cults from the fair works of tillage since, in his opinion … the idea of the gods comes to men in this way" (Themistius, *Or.* 30 = B5). The key to the emergence of religion is usefulness.[12]

Prodicus is said to have distinguished two stages in the development of religion.[13] In the first stage, "the things that nourish and benefit us were first acknowledged and honored as gods." The beneficial things included "the sun, the moon, and rivers and springs and in general anything that is beneficial to our life because of the benefit

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[10] It is essential that the *homo mensura* statement include "a sociological concept of cognition and its value," says Eugène Dupréel, *Les Sophistes* (Neuchâtel: Éditions du Griffon, 1948), pp. 19, 25.

[11] Michael Nill, *Morality and Self-interest in Protagoras, Antiphon and Democritus* (Leiden: Brill, 1985), p. 31.

[12] Adam Drozdek, 'Prodicus: deification of usefulness', *Myrtia* 21 (2006), 57–63.

[13] The two-stage theory of religious development was first claimed for Prodicus by Wilhelm Nestle, 'Bemerkungen zu den Vorsokratikern und Sophisten', *Philologus* 67 (1908), pp. 556–558.

derived from them, just as the Egyptians [deify] the Nile" (SE 9.18 = B5). In the second phase, people who benefited others – "discoverers of foods and shelter and other skills" – were elevated to divine status (Persaeus, *ap.* Philodemus, *De pietate* col. 9 = B5). That is, in the first phase, anything beneficial would be a subject of divinization, in the second phase, the discoverers of beneficial inventions would be proclaimed divine. The second phase places the emphasis of human impact on the development of human civilization – particularly in the area of agriculture; the first phase treats on a par natural entities and entities created by men. This would reflect the Sophist view of the evolution of human society from simple and disorganized to more developed and civilized as reflected in the myth of Protagoras.

Prodicus uses ethnographic data from different parts of the world and, to some extent, performs research in comparative religion. As to the second phase in the development of religion, it is enough to notice that popular religion presented the gods as givers of particular goods. What was new in Prodicus' theory was reducing the gods to human status. They were givers of goods, but human givers, not divine. They were proclaimed to be gods by grateful men, and so, in reality, they are gods only in name, not in essence.

As interesting as the problem of the existence of two phases in Prodicus' theory may be, it is of secondary importance. The primary innovation of the theory lies in the motive for an introduction of divinities. For his contemporary, Democritus, when he said that popular religion attributed divinity to various natural phenomena such as lightning, conjunction of stars, or eclipses of the sun, the motive was fear because people were afraid of them (SE 9.24 = 68A75).[14] For Prodicus, it was appreciation:[15] what is appreciated can be divinized whether part of nature or something invented by men. The sun or water in general or a particular body of water is greatly appreciated as something that enables the very life of any living being and thus is divinized. Bread and wine, appreciated as maintaining and enhancing human life, are divinized as well.

It is interesting to observe that, for Socrates and for the Stoics, the existence of useful things was a testimony of the beneficence of the gods, of divine providence, and of the existence of the gods. For Prodicus, it is the other way around: the existence of useful and beneficial things led to the creation of the gods by man. He could say that the existence of the gods is a proof of the existence of beneficial things in nature.

Does this make Prodicus an atheist? Sextus includes him on a short list of those who are called ἄθεοι, that is, those who say that God does not exist (SE 9.51 = B5), which means that it was not just Sextus' opinion that Prodicus was an atheist. Sextus is the only source in which Prodicus is explicitly called *atheos*. However, Prodicus' religious nonconformity is mentioned more than once. Therefore, because there is no trace of Prodicus' positive theology, considering Prodicus as an atheist seems to be rather well founded.

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[14] For Democritus, fear was also a source of various ideas concerning the afterlife (Stobaeus 4.52.40 = 68B297).

[15] According to Prodicus, "the sense of gratitude based on the assessment of value is the source of religion," Andrzej Bańkowski, 'Prodikos z Keos i jego teoria religii', *Euhemer* 6 (1962), no. 3, p. 17.

The origin of religion according to Protagoras hardly lends itself to a rational explanation. Religion emerges first and then emerge language and different practical skills. The role of religion is also unclear if a sociological explanation is attempted. Prodicus removes any unclarity. By claiming that "the idea of the gods" is derived from "the fair works of the tillage," Prodicus closes the door on the possibility that maybe the divine sphere exists – at least the sphere of traditional divinities – but is inaccessible for human cognition. The otherworldly sphere is removed from Prodicus' universe. Religion is purely the invention of men who elevate to the divine status what and who is useful: useful things and human benefactors. Prodicus is original in this because he is the only Sophist to deify human inventors.

The reason for choosing usefulness in his explanation of the phenomenon of religion may also be quite prosaic. Prodicus appears to have been touched by megalomania: it is hardly possible that any shy and modest teacher would charge the exorbitant fee of 50 drachmas for his lessons so that only a few could afford them.[16] To be sure, such prices need to be justified somehow, and the usefulness would be certainly a top reason to pay for the lessons. All religions witness to the veneration of the benefactors of people. Such benefactors are discoverers in civic engineering, cooking, and various "useful skills." Prodicus himself was renowned for his linguistic studies, in particular, the problem of synonymy. For him, this certainly was a useful skill and worthy of charging high fees. Therefore, a claim can be made that among the ones elevated to divine status are also the Sophists of old.[17] The honor paid to them sufficiently justifies the usefulness of the Sophists. Furthermore, it is not impossible that Prodicus saw himself as a candidate for such an elevation by his contemporaries if only because he saw himself as a discoverer of the skill of discourse (Plato, *Phaedr.* 267b = A20). And, to some extent, he got his wish when Plato, probably tongue in cheek,[18] called him divine (θεῖος, *Prot.* 316a = A2; θεσπέσιος, *Theaet.* 151b = A3a).

The *Sisyphus*

In a long, 42-line fragment preserved from the lost play *Sisyphus*, the protagonist describes the beginnings of human life as rampant anarchy and brutality. To remedy the problem, men devised law and justice with which crimes could be kept in check. The law prevented crimes that could be detected. To also prevent crimes committed in secret, some clever and wise man invented the gods so "that the wicked might

[16] Plato, *Crat.* 384b = A11; Aristotle, *Rhet.* 1415b15–17 = A12. Cf. the opinion that he was fond of making money, Philostratus, *Soph.* 1.12 = A1.

[17] Protagoras says that the Sophist's art is ancient (Plato, *Prot.* 316d), an opinion which Prodicus very well may have shared. A possibility of divinizing philosophers is mockingly mentioned by Sextus 9.41 and immediately dismissed as ludicrous. It may not have been so ludicrous to Prodicus.

[18] Zeller's claim that Plato mentions Prodicus in his dialogues only mockingly is documented by Richard Heinze, 'Über Prodikos aus Keos', *Berichte über die Verhandlungen der Königlich Sächsischen Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften zu Leipzig, Philologisch-historische Classe* 36 (1884), pp. 315–335.

experience fear, even if they act or say or think in secret," and thus the secret crimes could be stopped by the fear of divine retribution. Only then, when men were convinced about the existence of the divine that "will hear all that is said among mortals and will be able to see all that is done" was the law able to fight lawlessness successfully (SE 9.54 = 88B25).

The first problem with this fragment is the uncertainty of its authorship. The ancients attributed it to Critias (SE 9.54; SE, *PH* 3.218) and to Euripides.[19] However, even if the authorship were known, it would be impossible to conclude from this fragment alone the beliefs of its author. It is possible that the views put in the mouth of Sisyphus were intended to agree with the character of a crafty criminal and to indicate the danger of such notions if not their absurdity. At the very least, the author "may have found it amusing to equip a mythological rascal with such anachronistically modern views."[20] The views are similar to those expressed by the Sophists because the gods are considered as an imaginative construct introduced for social and political purposes. In their explanations, the Sophists did not use the fear factor as the reason for the introduction of the gods, but Democritus did, who also did not deny their existence.

The important problem for the author of the *Sisyphus* was that of undetected crimes. This problem was commonly discussed in the late fifth century, not from a religious standpoint, but from a political and sociological point of view.[21] The existence of a society and a state depends on social stability which can be permanently disrupted by antisocial behavior, such as rampant theft, sedition, and murder. Laws are established to prevent that from happening, but laws need to be enforced in all cases whether crimes are detected or undetected. Undetected crimes can be suppressed if they are pronounced detectable, if not by human authorities, then by higher powers, by the gods. Knowing everything, they know the crimes committed in secret and can punish them if human authorities cannot. That much was also claimed by Plato (*Laws* 899d–905c). In the eyes of the author of the *Sisyphus*, the problem was as important in his times as at the dawn of humanity and, according to him, the gods were invented to address the problem. The inventor of the gods was just a rationalist of the age of the *Sisyphus* author translated into the past to deal with the problem of social stability. It is taken for granted that the gods are only a useful fiction and that there is no ontological reality behind them. They are but an invention – superhuman guards of human social order, superhuman prosecutors of human crimes. The fiction of the superhuman sphere thus guarantees the existence of the reality of the human realm, the continuation of the existence of society seems to require an underlying lie, a real order seems to require a fictitious order to endure.

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[19] Pseudo-Plutarch, *Plac*. 1.6.7, 880ef; Aetius 1.7.2, Eusebius, *Praep. ev.* 14.16.1; Galen, *Hist. philos.* 8, 19.250, 35; they all say that Euripides put the statement in the mouth of Sisyphus to avoid the charge of impiety.

[20] Dana Sutton, 'Critias and atheism', *Classical Quarterly* 31 (1981), p. 37.

[21] Michael Nill, *Morality and Self-interest in Protagoras, Antiphon and Democritus* (Leiden: Brill, 1985), pp. 54–58; Harvey E. Yunis, 'The debate on undetected crime and an undetected fragment from Euripides' Sisyphus', *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 75 (1988), pp. 40–41.

The reality has to be based on fiction, truth has to be based on a lie. The work of an Athenian intellectual would lie by stripping the religious background of its apparent reality, by showing that the gods are introduced in the service of the societal stasis. It would be interesting to know how far he would like to go with this. By revealing the fictitious foundation of social stability, the intellectual apparently endangers this stability, unless it is assumed that the society is ready for such news and the fictitious foundation of the society can be jettisoned altogether. This can be done when there is a strong belief in social and psychological progress, otherwise, removing the gods can be satisfying in the eyes of the intellectual, but if everyone begins to think in this way, the existence of society may be exposed to a serious danger. This may be the reason why such a noble lie is exposed in the form of a play, a fiction. Fiction is exposed by a fictitious figure (unless, Sisyphus is considered to have existed) in a fictitious speech that reveals the truth. In this way, the truth of the reality of the gods (as understood by the intellectual) is revealed, but in such a fashion that it should not be taken too seriously because of potentially harmful social consequences. This, by the way, could be an argument in favor of Critias' authorship of the *Sisyphus*. As a politician, he was concerned about the social order, and so he disguised his views about the noble lie in the form of a play, and the view is never found in his non-literary fragments. He showed what the origin of social order is, but in no wise did he want to abolish this order. Religion, fictitious or otherwise, is all too important for social stability to be abolished. But at least intellectuals should know its true nature and showing this truth through fiction should reach them.

The progression from Protagoras' agnosticism and utilitarianism to rationalization of religion by Prodicus and the author of the *Sisyphus* is radicalized in the form of atheism.

Atheism

The problem of atheism has already been mentioned several times in the preceding sections. Ἄθεος, in the sense of denying the gods' existence, is first used by Plato along with the phrase θεοὺς οὐ νομίζειν (*Apol.* 26c); the latter expression was used to express an actual atheism.[22] The expression did not mean "not honoring the gods," but "not believing in the existence of the gods" and, consequently, not being afraid of their vengeance in the case of a misdeed.[23] Being an atheist could be dangerous because of the possibility of the process of impiety.

Impiety (ἀσέβεια) was punishable by law, but its definition is unclear. It appears that it was neglect in the area of cultic practices (cf. pseudo-Aristotle, *De virt. et vit*. 1251a31–33; Polybius 36.9.15). The *Euthyphron* includes an inconclusive discussion of the concept of piety; the official understanding of piety is expressed by Euthyphron: proper handling of the gods (12c), giving to the gods what is appropriate, in particular, offerings and prayers (14b). In Xenophon, the essence of piety lies in the knowledge of established norms of revering gods (*Mem*. 4.6.2–4). Pseudo-Aristotle

[22] Wilhelm Fahr, *Θεοὺς νομίζειν. Zum problem der Anfänge des Atheismus bei den Griechen* (Hildesheim: Olms, 1969), p. 168.

[23] Jean Rudhardt, 'La definition du délit d'impiété d'après la législation attique', *Museum Helveticum* 17 (1960), 91.

in the same breath includes in *asebeia* wrong-doing against the gods, deified spirits, the departed, parents, and fatherland (*De virt. et vit*. 1251a31–33). By neglecting religious observance, citizens endanger their city by inciting the wrath of the gods. Therefore, *asebeia* is not as much a crime against religion as against the city.[24] Each act of disrespect of, and thus an assault on, the cultic practices is an assault on the *polis* and the existing social and political order, therefore, impiety in that sense is tantamount to political treason. This is reinforced in the atmosphere of political and social uncertainty, and certainly the Peloponnesian War (431–404 BC), as any war, created such an atmosphere as also did the political upheavals of the seizure of political power by the Thirty Tyrants (404 BC) and the subsequent regaining of power by democratic forces (403 BC). However, it is too strong to state that in the case of impiety processes "above all the motivation was political opposition" to Pericles and his admirers.[25] This can be proven only for Aristotle. For Anaxagoras, political motive could be present, but a real reason was his denial of mantic. For Diagoras, any political motive is missing, and so it is for Protagoras.[26] In most cases, such a motivation simply cannot be found.

Most of the processes of impiety are related to the cult: robbing a temple, desecrating graves, polluting mysteries, damaging olive trees, a deviation by a priest from accepted rituals, the misuse of the cult for witchcraft, unacceptable behavior in the places of cult, and mocking the gods of the city. Revering foreign gods is not against the law if the new cult has nothing immoral. And so, the priestess Ninos is accused when she not only made offerings to the foreign god Sabazius but also mixed love potions. Phryne was accused because she both introduced the Thracian god Isodaetes, and organized immoral meetings in her house. Theoris, a priestess of a foreign god, was also accused of mixing poison. Aeschylus was accused of profanation of mysteries in one scene, but he got off by stating that he knew nothing about it. Euripides was in danger of accusation because of some pronouncement about ides. Aristophanes was never charged although he caricatured the gods in his plays.[27]

In the second half of the fifth century, when freethinking became a threat to the religion of the city, *asebeia* also included "theoretical denial of the gods" so that the *asebie* processes are in fact atheism processes. The processes concentrated on the denial of the traditional gods rather than on the exponents of philosophical theology such as Xenophanes, Heraclitus, Parmenides, or Democritus. Theoretical atheism is not punished, only an attack on the religion of the state, and mocking the gods and the cult. No poet or thinker was sentenced to death with the exception of Socrates.

Processes of impiety had social and political reasons, but the agnostic and outright atheistic tendencies had theological and scientific reasons. The emergence of Greek

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[24] Adolf Menzel, 'Untersuchungen zum Sokratesprozeß' [1902], in his *Hellenika*, p. 22; Ernst Sandvoss, 'Asebie und Atheismus im klassischen Zeitalter der griechischen Polis', *Saeculum* 19 (1968), p. 314.

[25] G.B. Kerferd, *The Sophistic Movement* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), p. 165; Leopold Schmidt, *Die Ethik der alten Griechen* (Berlin: Hertz, 1882; reprinted Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt: Frommann, 1964), vol. 2, p. 25, says more generally that in accusation of philosophers, religion was but a pretext and the real motive was of a political nature.

[26] Menzel, 'Untersuchungen zum Sokratesprozeß', p. 25.

[27] Ibid., pp. 23–24.

theology, particularly in the form of Anaximander's *Apeiron*, had a religious root; it was a desire to purify the concept of God by including infinity and the source of moral order as primary attributes of God. God was also considered a source of natural order, but this order was accessible to human investigation, that is, science was possible. The trend that is pronounced in the Sophists is taking less and less interest in the theological aspect of reality by seeing it as inaccessible to human reason and senses and finally by abolishing it altogether. Theological developments in the Presocratics made nature orderly and analyzable by removing from it the fickleness of the actions of the traditional gods, but, particularly with the atomists and the Sophists, that led to purging reality from the supranatural realm. Traditional divinities had very strong earthly grounding by exhibiting features resembling human character and behavior. The gods of philosophers (*Apeiron*, Logos of Heraclitus, One God of Xenophanes, or *Nous* of Anaxagoras) were so detached from the realities of everyday life, so distant from the laws of common experience, that it was easy to dismiss their reality. Also, when the division between the natural and the supranatural is made, it becomes easy to ignore the latter to the point of abolishing it altogether. Only the natural remains, only what is visible counts, and man becomes the measure of all things.[28]

The problem of atheism was real enough that Plato distinguished several kinds of atheism (*Laws* 908bc). At least nine fifth-century people were considered *atheoi*.[29] However, some of them certainly were not atheists, at least, in the modern sense of the word, that is, they did not deny the existence of all gods (Anaxagoras, Socrates, Diogenes of Apollonia). Protagoras was an agnostic, but hardly an atheist. Hippon, Prodicus, and Critias may have been, but it cannot be stated in all certainty. One quintessential atheist was supposed to have been Diagoras of Melos, but even that is not beyond doubt. He is known only for his supposed atheism and not much else. Only one fact about him is known with certainly, namely an attack on Eleusinian mysteries is included in his book.[30] But such an attack is not tantamount to the complete denial of any divinity. Some late sources list him as one who claims that there are no gods, but it is still possible that only traditional gods were meant. It is thus far from certain that his views exemplify "atheism – radical, extreme, and uncompromising."[31] Already Philodemus attempted to show that there is an evidence of piety in Diagoras' book and that his atheism was but a joke.[32]

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[28] It is said that atheism did not develop from philosophy (or theology); it came "from the historiography founded by Hecataeus of Miletus which had an enormous influence on Sophistry," P.A. Meijer, 'Philosophers, intellectuals and religion in Hellas', in H.S. Versnel (ed.), *Faith, Hope and Worship* (Leiden: Brill, 1981), p. 228. However, it seems that there would not be any Sophism if there were no Milesians, Xenophanes, or Anaxagoras. Anti-theological tendencies are enabled by theological developments and so is the progress of science; hence, the progress of science, including historiography, had only secondary influence on the emergence atheistic tendencies.

[29] Fahr, *Θεοὺς νομίζειν*, p. 180.

[30] Felix Jacoby, *Diagoras ὁ Ἄθεος* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1959), pp. 16, 24, 27.

[31] Ibid., pp. 26, 31.

[32] Leonard Woodbury, 'The date and atheism of Diagoras of Melos', *Phoenix* 19 (1965), p. 199; on other doubts, see pp. 198, 200. A case against Diagoras' authorship of the atheistic book is made by Marek Winiarczyk, 'Diagoras von Melos – Wahrheit und Legende', *Eos* 68 (1980), pp. 51–75.

Although it may now be difficult to decide what was the degree of atheism in a particular author, it remains undeniable that there were very strong atheistic, and certainly deistic, tendencies in the fifth-century Greek intellectual atmosphere. Thinkers, particularly the Sophists, were preoccupied with the here and now, expressing their agnosticism with respect to the realm of the divine and explaining religion as a social phenomenon that emerges because of social and political necessities. This certainly encouraged rejection of what exceeds the sphere of the divine and by suspending judgment about it, led to practical if not theoretical rejection of this sphere. Therefore, ideas attributed to Diagoras are "some of the symptoms of general breakdown of cultural piety that spread at the end of the fifth century."[33] Because religion was so strongly connected with the well-being of the *polis*, the situation led to a legal backlash in the form of impiety processes. It also led to a philosophical backlash in attempts to restore the grandeur of Greek theology made by Socrates (as reported by Xenophon), Plato, and the Stoics. But agnosticism and deism did not die out. They continued in the views of the Cynics – beginning with Diogenes of Sinope, the Sceptics – particularly, Carneades and Sextus Empiricus,[34] and also in the Lyceum (Strato).

[33] Fritz Wehrli, review of Jacoby's book, *Gnomon* 23 (1961), p. 126; Winiarczyk, 'Diagoras von Melos – Wahrheit und Legende', p. 75.

[34] See Adam Drozdek, 'Sceptics and a religious instinct', *Minerva* 18 (2005), pp. 93–108.

Chapter 10

Socrates

It is interesting and ominous that the *Euthyphro*, the dialogue considered to be the first in the Platonic corpus, is devoted to the problem of piety. The problem is posed in the context of an impending trial of Socrates, but it also sets the tone for Socratic philosophy (not to mention Plato's own philosophical system). Although the problem of piety is not altogether resolved in this dialogue, the *Euthyphro* points to what is associated with its resolution, namely human behavior toward the divine, and thereby the nature of the divine and its relation to the world as a whole and to men in particular. Piety stands between theology and ethics; piety is treating theology seriously, so seriously, in fact, that ethical claims are based on the nature of divinity. Although Socrates is thought to concentrate on ethics, his ethical claims are hardly intelligible, even void, if his theology is not taken into account. Theology constitutes the foundation of the Socratic system. In his trial speeches, Socrates is vague about his theological claims, even purposely ambiguous. He does not specify his concept of the divine, letting the jurors think that he takes the gods to be as the popular religion presents them. After all, this is his defense speech of which the primary purpose is to present himself as free of charges, not to lecture the jurors about his innermost theological convictions. He refers to the celebrated *daimonion* and shows how in line with traditional belief this presumed theological novelty of his is, but, in fact, the *daimonion* occupies only a secondary position in his theology. In conversations with his friends and pupils – as preserved by Xenophon – he presents his theological views rather clearly.

Argument from design

In one conversation, Socrates wants to convince his interlocutor, Aristodemus, that piety is necessary for happiness. Aristodemus does not sacrifice, pray, or use divination and mocks those who do so (*Mem.* 1.4.2). This gives the impression of an atheistic leaning; only later during conversation does he state that he does not deny the existence of the gods but believes that the gods are very remote and have no interest in human affairs (1.4.10–11). At first, Socrates is prompted to convince him of the existence of the gods. The proof is not only used to strengthen Aristodemus' feeble belief in the existence of the gods, but also to serve as an argument that something more is required than just the acknowledgment of this existence, namely paying respect to them.

What Socrates offers is the proof from design. Aristodemus expresses his admiration to the five great Greek artists. However, their creations are merely motionless and inanimate entities, and Aristodemus readily agrees that the creators of living and animate beings are far superior to the five artists, provided that living

beings are created by design, not by chance (1.4.4). Aristodemus agrees that life and motion are superior to their absence, but, still, they may be accidental. Artistic creations are admirable because they are done by design. Living beings are superior to such inanimate creations because they are living, which does not have to mean that they are designed. Therefore, Socrates' argumentation must not stop at pointing out this superiority. He has to show that living beings are also designed. The way is expressed by Aristodemus: "what came to be for a purpose (ἐπ' ὠφελείᾳ) is the work of design (γνώμη)" (1.4.4); that is, a teleological reasoning is in order.

It is clear from the makeup of the human organism that it was designed. Socrates names eyes, ears, nose, and tongue as sensory organs and describes briefly the makeup of the eye and the ear. Also, he describes the configuration of the teeth and mouth as meaningfully designed for eating. There are also innate drives that point to a meaningful design of humans. Socrates also mentions a father's "natural desire to beget children" and a mother's desire to take care of a child as the manifestation of design (1.4.7). These desires of the two sexes of course presume the existence of the sexes so that they may join "into fellowship for the greatest advantage to themselves" (*Oec.* 7.18). There is also a child's will to live and a fear of death (1.4.7), which imply the existence of the self-preservation instinct found in all living creatures.

Another line of argument points to the material makeup of human beings. There is no doubt that man possesses some wisdom (*phronimon*). This wisdom is associated with the body that contains "a tiny measure of earth … and a small drop of water"[1] and other elements (1.4.9). The mind (*nous*) is the seat, we may presume, of this wisdom, and the seat of intelligence and design, cannot itself be a work of accident. The seat of making designs must itself have been designed. Socrates takes it for granted that the universe in its infinity is ordered (ευτάκτως). This was a common assumption at least since Anaximander (12B1). A conclusion may be drawn that there must be a mind that is to the whole of the universe as the human mind is to the human body. Socrates draws later a similar conclusion when he says that the mind directs the body according to its will, and similarly, "the thought (φρόνησις) [that is] in everything directs all according to its pleasure" because just as one's soul can think (φροντίζειν) about different things, so god's thought can pay attention to everything at once (1.4.17).

Socrates asks an apparently rhetorical question, whether or not the order of the universe is due to an accident. Aristodemus says yes since he cannot see the maker of this order. To which Socrates responds that the soul that directs the human body is invisible, too, and yet it would be difficult to say that everything we do is due to an accident (1.4.9). Because this statement is made in the context of discussing the human mind and the cosmic mind, it appears that Socrates is equating the mind and the soul, or at least he would consider the mind to be the soul's faculty. This context also encourages the view that Socrates' God is a world soul[2] that is to the cosmos as

[1] Water and earth as the only elements in the human body are mentioned by Hesiod, *Op.* 61 (Hephaestus mixed earth and water to make the body of Pandora) and Xenophanes 23B33 ("we were all born from earth and water").

[2] Olof Gigon, *Kommentar zum ersten Buch von Xenophons Memorabilien* (Basel: Reinhardt, 1953), p. 133; Émile Callot, *La Doctrine de Socrate* (Paris: Marcel Rivière, 1970), p. 125.

the human soul is to the human body. This is also confirmed by the statement that thought is only in the soul (1.2.53).

Aristodemus refers in the conversation to the divine, *to daimonion*, whose existence he does not deny, but to him, the divine is too magnificent, too great to serve (1.4.10). In fact, the divine is infinitely great and magnificent because the cosmos is filled with infinite masses. The assumption is that human service can in no wise benefit the divinity; the smallness of this service adds nothing to the infinity of the divinity. Socrates uses as an argument the statement that "the more magnificent is the power that finds fit to serve you, the more one must honor it" (1.4.10). However, does this power really serve man? Is it true that the gods have any regard for people? According to Socrates, thanks to the gods, humans are the only creatures that have upright posture which gives them many advantages over animals. Humans have hands through the use of which humans are happier creatures than animals. The shape and the position of the tongue allows humans to use articulate language. In other words, the possession of language, and the ability to produce and to create, are distinctive marks of humanity which cannot be dismissed as simple accidents. They are endowments given to the mortals by the gods. Other indications of divine care are visible in the human mind. Only man has "the noblest soul" (1.4.13) because only man knows about the existence of the gods and only man worships them. Moreover, the human soul can make provisions for the needs of the body; it can acquire knowledge and retain it. The human body and the human soul are harmoniously fit for one another. If a rational soul had been located in an animal body, then nothing could have been accomplished and such an arrangement would be witness to the accidental workings of nature rather than divine care.

The entire arrangement of the cosmos is a proof of divine care. Night and day (the sun and the moon), kinds of available foods, kinds of plants to grow and animals to domesticate, changes of seasons, the rate of change of natural phenomena, and "the multitude of beautiful and useful things" all witness gods' love for men and that they were done "for the sake of men" (4.3.8,11). The existing universal order is a proof that God is "wise and loving" (1.4.7). We are not only designed, but designed to our greatest advantage. We are best fit to our environment (1.4.11–14, 4.3.11). The rest of the universe is also designed with the needs of humans in mind. Everything in the universe is "fair and good" (4.3.13, 1.4.13).

Divine care is also visible in the divine presence in lives of humans. The gods are not silent; they give signs and speak through diviners and oracles to warn people and give them advice. When people fail to discern the future, the gods "send portents for warning to the Greeks … and to all people" (1.4.15–16, 4.3.12). The gods should be consulted in matters small and big. For example, when a person wants to befriend someone, he must first "seek guidance from the gods, whether they counsel [us] to make a friend of him" (2.6.8). The belief of the gods' ability "to help and to harm" is inborn, and it would be truly remarkable if the falsehood of this belief were not detected throughout the ages (1.4.16). That is, common opinion concerning the gods' care is used by Socrates as an argument for the reality of this claim.

As expounded above, the existence of God and the gods is founded, by Socrates, on an argument from design. It was the first time in Western thought that the argument was used, and, for that matter, the first time any argument for the existence of God

was proposed. The use of such an argument is natural in a discussion with someone who doubts the existence of gods. A need for such an argument is a novelty of fifth-century Greek philosophy and theology, times of much more liberal thinking about religion than before. However, the argument is based on teleological thinking which is prominent in traditional mythology. The *Theogony* is a long teleological poem about the way things were brought into existence. The world is not a result of an accident, but its emergence is due to the actions of the gods. Teleological thinking is also clearly present in Homer, although more on the level of human history than cosmogony. Also, philosophy is saturated with teleological thinking long before Socrates.[3]

Teleology was explicitly introduced in philosophical speculation by Anaxagoras (59B13) and Diogenes of Apollonia (64B5), and it was used later by Plato (*Phil.* 28d; *Laws* 886a, 897c, 899d, 966de; *Epin*. 982a), Aristotle (*De gen. et corr.* 336b27; *De part. an.* 658b14, fr. 12), Euripides (*Suppl.* 201–213), and the Stoics. However, teleology in philosophy can be traced back to Anaximander. Every time, in creating or molding the world, a design of a deity is present, we have a teleological view of the world. And Anaximander's divine *Apeiron* was guiding the world and had control not only over physical processes in the world but also over moral dimension. Such rational guidance is strongly present in the Heraclitean universe where the universal Logos is in control of natural and social phenomena. Anaximander and Heraclitus, however, assumed that the universe is imbued with rationality and forethought through the *Apeiron* and Logos. They did not undertake to prove the existence of God from the existence of design. They began with the rational divinity and went on to show how the divinity holds command over the universe. The argument from design did not originate, then, with Anaximander, but teleological thinking in philosophy did. Socrates only continues the way of viewing the cosmos as an ordered entity, but he uses this order as an indication of an intelligent cause that stands behind it. God is this cause, and because God is not only rational but also benevolent toward his creation, Socrates sides with Diogenes of Apollonia who expressed a strong Leibnizian statement that everything was ordered is the most beautiful manner (64B3), which is also Socrates' conviction (1.4.13).

Teleological thinking is not limited to theology only. Socrates, probably more than any other thinker before him, extends it to any area of human life, in particular, to the way scientific research should be exercised.

Aristotle said that Socrates "occupied himself with ethical matters and neglected nature as a whole but he sought the universal in these ethical matters" (*Met.* 987b1–3; Eusebius, *PE* 15.62.7–9). This may be taken to mean that natural philosophy was unimportant to him, not ontology and theology. Socrates did discuss the issues related to astronomy, physiology, geology, and the like, as we can find in Anaximander, Heraclitus, or Diogenes of Apollonia, but that does not mean that he was uninterested in relating ethical issues to natural philosophy. The latter was only important as a background for ethical issues. Ethics was intimately connected to theology, and theology can hardly be divorced from cosmological and cosmogonic issues. The latter

[3] If we consider these words as original, then Socrates himself recognizes the fact of the presence of teleological reasoning in "our forebears" and the "thinkers of old" (*Philebus* 28de, 30d).

were the background and justification for the validity of ethical claims. He can then state that he has no expertise and no share in natural science (*Ap.* 19a–d, 18b–23e; *Phaedo* 96a–99d). He is not interested in, nor does he discuss, the workings and the laws of the universe and considered such interests to be folly (*Mem.* 1.1.11). His primary interest is in self-knowledge, and he considers commonly accepted views on the natural mechanisms tentatively satisfactory (*Phaedrus* 230a). He is disinterested in pure science, that is, in knowledge of the universe for the sake of knowledge. If one cannot create winds or cause the change of seasons from a presumed knowledge of natural laws, then time and effort devoted to acquire this knowledge is simply wasted (1.1.15). It is of little value to know natural laws if knowledge of the self is abandoned (1.1.8).[4] This time and effort should rather be channeled into more practical pursuits, such as the study of theology, ethics, and statesmanship (1.1.16). Moreover, there is a limit that human research can reach and any attempts to have a complete natural explanation to cross these limits are futile at best and can lead to impiety at worst (1.1.14). A certain level of explanation is forever inaccessible to the human condition and is known only to the gods (4.7.6). It is thus in the best interest of men to abandon such type of studies to devote themselves to what is accessible, practical, and important.

Socrates himself credits Anaxagoras with opening his mind to the right direction and giving him an impulse to think in teleological terms (*Phaedo* 97c) so that he should seek for "true causes" (98d) such as the mind that is behind all natural causes. It is true that without bones and sinews we could not walk anywhere, but to say that bones and sinews are the causes of what we do, not our will or intention, "is to speak lazily and carelessly"; we must distinguish "the real cause from that without which the cause would not be able to act as a cause" (99b). The intention to move is primary – physiology and anatomy are the necessary preconditions to realizing the goal, but, in a sense, they are secondary. Teleology takes precedence over mechanistic explanation; efficient causes are merely tools of final causes, not only on the individual level, but on the cosmic level as well.[5]

However, study of nature is not rejected wholesale. As a young man, Socrates was an avid student of natural sciences (*Phaedo* 96ab). Therefore, he saw some merit in scientific research, but later he became disenchanted with the results since he frequently changed his mind about what causes what ("do we think with our blood, or air, or fire," and so on) and found explanations offered by science unsatisfactory. Moreover, some natural studies are actually encouraged by Socrates. For example, the study of astronomy is beneficial as far as it enables men to properly determine

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[4] Socrates' "disavowal applies strictly to the sort of theorizing that terminates in accounts invoking naturally necessary, nonteleological, physicalistic causes of things," Mark L. McPherran, *The Religion of Socrates* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1996), p. 281. "Socrates' criticism is directed solely at the sort of detailed enquiry into physical causes that is so prevalent in pre-Socratic thought," Joseph G. DeFilippo and Phillip T. Mitsis, 'Socrates and Stoic natural law', in P.A. Vander Waerdt (ed.), *The Socratic Movement* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994), p. 259. Later, for similar reasons, Epicurus, who is considered to have been well trained in geometry, discourages the study of this science, Norman W. DeWitt, *Epicurus and His Philosophy* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1954), pp. 45–46, 108.

[5] "The true cause is the end to accomplish and efficient causes are only secondary conditions of its realization," Callot, *La Doctrine de Socrate*, p. 48.

time (*Mem.* 4.7.4). Also a measure of geometry and arithmetic is indispensable (4.7.3,8) because counting, measuring, and weighing are skills which everyone needs and everyone can learn without a recourse to divine help (1.1.9).[6] However, the scope of geometry and astronomy is so vast that it can "occupy lifetime of man to the exclusion of many useful studies" (4.7.3,5). A pure scientist is a sad figure who abandons what is important to pursue the useless and ultimately inaccessible goal of knowing the workings of the universe.

Although Socrates does not raise this issue, the study of nature can be defensible on one more count – namely, establishing the rationality of the world and, thus, the existence of a rational divinity to whom this order is due.

God

Socrates is certain that an argument from design proved the existence of God who is the source of order in the universe. God's eye can see the entire universe all at once; God's thought can ponder everything at once, too. This is as though God's thought was present everywhere at once. This omniscience allows God to have full control over the universe. God is present everywhere. Because the material substrate is clearly distinguished from the mind and invisible soul (1.4.8–9), this omnipresence is not of the pantheistic kind espoused later by the Stoics. Also, God is caring about everything. He only wants to be served and repays through counseling concerning things "unknown to men" (1.4.18).

Socrates sometimes appears to use "God" and "gods" interchangeably. For example:

1. He indicates that the gods care for men by shaping the body in a particular way, and before indicating that the human soul is also a proof of divine care, he says that "it was not enough to the God to take care of the body" (1.4.13).
2. From God's knowledge and God's care, he passes to the need to serve the gods and then to a summary statement that the divinity (*to theion*) is omniscient and caring about everything (1.4.17–18).
3. The same attributes and actions are ascribed to the gods and to God. Socrates proclaims the omniscience and omnipresence of the divine (1.4.17–18) and the omniscience and omnipresence of the gods (1.1.19).
4. The universal unwritten laws[7] are attributed to the gods and to God (4.4.19–20).
5. Socrates ascribes to God the creation of humans and the gods, too (1.4.10–11, 13–14, 18), but also says that God fulfills all the function of the gods.

On the other hand, Socrates distinguishes God from other gods as the one who "coordinates and holds together the entire universe" (4.3.13). This apparent

[6] "Within man's competence is what mathematically can be exactly established," Gigon, *Kommentar zum ersten Buch von Xenophons Memorabilien*, pp. 9, 13.

[7] As one commentator observed, such laws are "the voice of the deity speaking to the inner sense of every man," Rensselaer D.C. Robbins, notes in Xenophon, *Memorabilia of Socrates* (Andover: Wardwell, 1848), p. 372.

inconsistency can be resolved by considering the gods to be manifestations of God.[8] In this way, each mention of the gods is really a reference to God. Because of the many different ways God may manifest himself to people, an impression may arise that these are multiple deities that speak and act. In reality, the attributes of the gods are God's attributes; the gods are omniscient, omnipresent, and, in particular, caring for men because God is.

The gods can also be considered creations of God. Plato later presents in the *Timaeus* an image of the Demiurge who created the world and the gods, after which he retracted from the world and left the completion of the creation process and the care of the world to the gods. In this way, Plato's description would build on the Socratic idea of God who brought the world and the gods into being.[9]

Socrates makes numerous references to God (ὁ θεός) in his court speeches. He mentions God for the first time as "God of Delphi" (*Ap.* 20e), which certainly is assumed by all the listeners to be a reference to Apollo. However, Apollo is never mentioned by name. On the other hand, other gods' names are mentioned, most frequently in insignificant phases, such as "by Hera" (24e) or "by Zeus" (*Eu.* 4e; *Ap.* 25c, 26d, 35d; Xen., *Sym.* 4.1,3,5,6,8,49,55,60,61), "Aphrodite passion" (Xen., *Sym.* 3.3). This way of mentioning traditional gods is rather significant considering the fact that one of the three indictments was that Socrates does not recognize the gods of the state. The thrust of Socrates' argument is to show that he is not an atheist and that he believes in the gods, but he leaves it to the jury to guess that he also believes in the gods of the state, the gods as recognized by popular religion. He is evasive in the speech about the gods themselves – how he understands them, which gods he means – and the way he recognizes them.[10] He very generally says, "I believe in them [gods] as none of my accusers do" (35d). It may mean that he is more pious than the accusers, but it may also mean that his gods are not exactly the same as theirs. It is, in fact, both. He is more pious, or at least, his piety is different than that of the accusers, and also, his concept of divinity differs from theirs, the two things being interconnected: he recognizes the gods in a particular fashion because of his understanding of the nature of the divine.[11]

This unorthodox (although not novel) understanding of the divine can be detected in the *Euthyphro*. The dialog strives for a definition of piety and begins

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[8] William K.C. Guthrie, *Socrates* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1971), p. 156; Louise B. Zaidman and Pauline S. Pantel, *Religion in the Ancient Greek City* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p. 176; or as symbols of God's benevolence, as phrased by C.M. Rechenberg, *Entwickelung des Gottesbegriffes in der griechischen Philosophie* (Leipzig: Rossberg, 1872), p. 44.

[9] Cf. guarded statements made by J.C. Classen, 'The creator in Greek thought from Homer to Plato', *Classica et Mediaevalia* 23 (1962), p. 22.

[10] "There is little or nothing to show that the gods … the city believes in mean anything to Socrates at all," which substantiates a guarded statement that "he might almost be a monotheist," Myles F. Burnyeat, 'The impiety of Socrates', *Ancient Philosophy* 17 (1997), p. 4.

[11] In particular, it is true that "when Socrates talks about Apollo, then he means something other than someone who lives by tradition," Romano Guardini, *Der Tod des Sokrates: eine Interpretation der Platonischen Schriften Euthyphron, Apologie, Kriton und Phaidon* (Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1956), p. 52.

with a tentative definition that states that piety is what is dear to the gods (7a). The definition is discarded on the ground that the same thing can be dear to some gods and unacceptable to others "if indeed the gods disagree" (8e). Interestingly, through some attempted improvements, the discussion ends up at the starting point (15b). One way of looking at this circularity is that the proposed definition is not so bad, after all. How is this possible? A definition of piety should convey its essence, distinctive marks, criteria by which particular instances of piety can be recognized. Such a definition should convey a standard (παραδείγμα), an idea (εἶδος, even αὐτὸ τὸ εἶδος, idea itself), a characteristic feature (ἰδέα) that enables identification of pious acts (5d, 6de).[12] But this is a requirement that any definition should meet, not only a definition of piety. Although the question is not posed in the dialogue, one can ask what is God, what is the essence of divinity. It is clear that for Socrates the gods he recognizes are not the same as the traditional gods of mythology. Socrates expresses his disbelief that Euthyphro can take the traditional mythology at its face value. Socrates finds "hard to accept" the view that Zeus, "the best and most just of the gods," bound and castrated his father, Cronus, for eating his own children, which in the popular view makes Socrates wrong (6ab). There is certainly a problem with the definition of piety Euthyphro proposed if gods are the gods of mythology. However, it appears that Socrates wanted to call Euthyphro's attention to the fact that the concept of the divine should be purged of attributes unworthy of gods, even of men, that the concept should include only lofty, spiritual characteristics that befit God. There will be thus one essence of divinity to which all the gods are subsumed, the gods are dissolved not only ontologically by being manifestations of God, but also conceptually by being manifestations of one concept, of one definition of divinity. What is unpalatable and anthropomorphic is absent from such a definition and remains only a unity in the gods' plurality.

Notwithstanding the constant reference to the gods, Socrates' theology clearly expressed a monotheistic tendency.[13] The refined understanding of the divine makes it easier to see in the gods only a manifestation of one God. The question now is, what is the role of the *daimonion* in this theological and ethical context?

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[12] We can see here an adumbration of Plato's theory of ideas as maintained, for example, by Reginald E. Allen, *Plato's Euthyphro and the Earlier Theory of Forms* (New York: Humanities Press, 1970), pp. 67–68, although he distinguishes between the early and the middle dialog theory of ideas, pp. 130–132, 154–157. Burnet states that "the developed doctrine [of ideas] is assumed by Socrates," John Burnet, notes in Plato, *Euthyphro, Apology of Socrates and Crito* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1924), p. 31; but see Laszlo Versényi, *Holiness and Justice: an interpretation of Plato's Euthyphro* (Washington: University Press of America, 1982), pp. 45–46.

[13] In this way all differences "between gods become insignificant," and in such an approach "Socrates has the philosophical basis of monotheism," M.D. Henry, 'Socratic piety and the power of reason', in E. Kelly (ed.), *New Essays on Socrates* (Lanham: University Press of America 1984), p. 104. See also Burnyeat, 'The impiety of Socrates', p. 9. Phillipson detects in Socrates only "a certain progressive movement towards monotheism," Coleman Phillipson, *The Trial of Socrates* (London: Stevens, 1928), p. 423; for Wenley, Socrates' progress toward monotheism is conspicuous, Robert M. Wenley, *Socrates and Christ: a study in the philosophy of religion* (Edinburgh: Blackwood, 1889), p. 248.

Daimonion

The *daimonion* is a sign and voice (*Ap.* 31cd, 40bc; *Mem.* 1.1.3–5) that restraints Socrates from doing something, but it also may prescribe some action (*Ap.* 12; *Ap.* 31cd; *Mem.* 1.1.4, 4.3.12, 4.8.1). The *daimonion* gives primarily personal and practical counsel (*Ap.* 40a, 41cd; *Mem.* 1.1.4–5). The voice is heard since childhood (*Ap.* 31d; *Theages* 128d) and warns about harm and falsehood (*Ap.* 31d, 40a–c). It is also meaningful when the voice is silent. For example, its silence during the trial is a great proof (40c) that the outcome, a death sentence, is good.

The advice of the *daimonion* is useful (*Ap.* 31d) and good (40cd), and Socrates' experience shows that the voice is reliable (*Ap.* 13; *Ap.* 40a–c). Reason may be sufficient to make correct predictions but is not completely reliable (*Mem.* 4.3.12). Therefore, it is rational to put trust in *daimonion*'s voice. It is even unreasonable to do otherwise (1.1.8–9) because if the voice is ignored, a tragedy results (*Theages* 128d–131a).

Socrates does not ascribe to the *daimonion* any separate individuality and does not consider it an independent divinity; he does not establish any cult of the *daimonion* and makes no offerings or prayers on *daimonion*'s account. It is really not a new divinity added to the Pantheon. It is "some personal way in which God lets himself to be heard, which is analogous to other revelations recognized by tradition."[14] The source of this sign is the same as other signs. A new thing is that this sign does not have to be mediated through oracles and interpreted by priests. God can speak directly to individuals. The *daimonion* can be explained as conscience[15] or merely a hunch,[16] but to Socrates it was a real link between him and his creator. He was one of a chosen few who was endowed with this prophetic voice (*Rep.* 496c) and suffered a prophet's fate. The existence of God was not a theoretical construct, a deistic assumption, but a reality which can be experienced by everyone, directly or indirectly. Being closer and more obedient to the divine is not always an easy task, but Socrates was ready to be consistent in his views to the end and attest the reality of his theological conviction by taking the cup of hemlock.

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[14] Callot, *La Doctrine de Socrate*, p. 135.

[15] Sigurd Ribbing, *Über Socrates' Daimonion* (Upsala: Edquist & Berglund, 1870), p. 32.

[16] Intuition, Adam Krokiewicz, *Sokrates* (Warsaw: Pax 1958), pp. 63–63; "vague and peculiar feelings," Richard Kraut, 'Socrates, politics, and religion', in N.D. Smith and P.B. Woodruff (eds), *Reason and Religion in Socratic Philosophy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 16; Socrates "ascribed to the action of the *daemonion* much that was undoubtedly the normal activity of his own intellectual and moral state," Henry Edward [Manning], 'The *daemon* of Socrates', in his *Miscellanies* (New York: Catholic Publication Society, 1877), p. 349. The ability to recognize the signs of the times presented through naïve supernaturalism, Wenley, *Socrates and Christ*, pp. 38, 206. It is also claimed that from "irresistible impulse, a profound conviction" became externalized as the *daimonion* which eventually lead to hallucinations and madness, François Lélut, *Du Démon de Socrate, spécimen d'une application de la science psychologique à celle de l'histoire* (Paris: Trinquart, 1836), pp. 149, 177–179.

Soul

Socrates' primary goal is to care for the soul (*Mem.* 1.2.4–5; *Ap.* 29e) "to make it as good as possible" (*Ap.* 29de, 30ab). To care for the soul means to cultivate virtue and protect it from vice (*Cr.* 47c–49b). Virtue is more valuable than physical health (*Cr.* 48b; *Ap.* 28de, 30ab) and the soul is more valuable than the body (*Cr.* 47e–48a).

The soul is the grandest token of divine care (*Mem.* 1.4.13–14, 4.3.11–12, 14) and the soul more than anything else in the universe "partakes of the divine" (4.3.14, 1.4.13–14; *Alc. I* 133c; *Phaedo* 80a). Also, the soul is the ruling part of a human being; it not only is of a different nature than the body (*Mem.* 1.4.8–10), but it also "has the mastery of the body" (1.4.9; *Phaedo* 94b). For this reason, men should themselves take greatest care of their own souls because caring for the soul is caring for what is divine in man, and, thus, caring for one's own soul is a religious service.

Socrates does not commit himself to the view of immortality; he is almost evasive on the issue. He mentions two possible fates of the soul after death: complete annihilation or, "according to what is said," a migration of the soul from the earthly body to another place (*Ap.* 40c, *Phaedo* 107c). Annihilation does not have gradations; it has only one mode. But the statement that the soul goes to another place after death is an incomplete eschatological description. Where does the soul go exactly? What can it expect there? According to Socrates, the soul goes to Hades where it can expect a state of bliss in the company of the greatest of men of old. It is not the fate depicted by Homer or the Attic orators of a half-conscious shadow that exists in Hades.[17]

Annihilation and survival after death are the alternative options for the soul. However, Socrates is uncertain which is true. His parting words in the *Apology* are: "I go to die, you go to live. Which of us goes to the better lot is known to no one, except God" (42a), although a moment before he expresses readiness to "die many times if that [the second option] is true" (41a). He himself is quite certain that death is good for him because the *daimonion* was silent during the proceedings, which, as already mentioned, Socrates took to mean that this was a divine, tacit indication that it is better for Socrates to die than to live (41d). However, there are many evidences that Socrates strongly leaned toward the second eschatological option, immortal existence of the soul is a blissful state.

Before drinking the cup of hemlock, Socrates says that "one must utter a prayer to the gods that the journey from here to yonder be fortunate" (*Phaedo* 117b) which makes sense only in the view of his belief in immortality of the soul. He assures his friends that after death he will go away, which is not to be considered just a linguistic device to console them, because expressing "oneself badly is not only faulty … but does some harm to the soul" (115e). That is, he, Socrates, goes away after death although devoid of his earthly body. In a conversation with Crito, Socrates also says that souls are immortal (*Cr.* 54bc). It is true that in his speech, he presents the view of "the laws and the state" (50a). But he explicitly says that these words also express his own view, and Crito cannot convince him otherwise (54d). It should be clear then

[17] Erland Ehnmark, 'Socrates and the immortality of the soul', *Eranos* 44 (1946), p. 116.

that for Socrates "soul is evidently immortal" (*Phaedo* 114d),[18] and this is a major reason why he is not afraid of death, and it is he who consoles his friends rather than the opposite.

Socrates clearly distinguishes physical elements that constitute the body but not the mind. He also explicitly states that the bodily elements are just fractions of the elements that constitute the cosmos (1.4.8). From this and from the course of the argument, it may be inferred that the human mind is a fraction of the cosmic mind.[19] Because the idea of *creatio ex nihilo* was alien to the Greeks, the human mind had to come from a pre-existing substance and this – as maintained by Socrates – can only be something other than the four elements. One possibility is that the pre-existing elements were used by the divine creator as the material for the substance suitable for the mind. Another possibility is that God, who is also the cosmic mind, separated portions of his own substance to mold individual minds. Such a view is encouraged by the fact that Anaximander already claimed that the material to create the universe is separated from the divine *Apeiron*.

Ethics

The argument from design points to the divine intelligence that created the harmonious and ordered universe. Such a work, to be sure, requires God's intelligibility, but it also points to the moral dimension of God. The design of the world is not just any design. The world is the best possible – designed with man's needs in mind. God cares not just for the survival of his creation, but also for its harmonious and happy life. Such a work requires more than intelligence; it requires goodness, care, and benevolence of the creator. And these are the attributes that characterize God in Socrates' view. Such a view is important in its own right and has important consequences for practical life. Because man is closest to God among his creation, because man's soul partakes in the divine, man should – to the best of his abilities – manifest these divine attributes in his life. Life should be characterized by the care for the soul, and this care manifests itself in good life.[20]

The best pursuit for a man is doing good, and he who does nothing good is neither useful nor dear to the gods (*Mem.* 3.9.14–15). Therefore, everyone should

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[18] Also, in view of Socrates' statements, "death as an annihilation becomes a mere theoretical possibility," ibid., p. 121. See also arguments in favor of the view of Socrates' belief in the immortality of the soul in Émile de Strycker, 'Socrate et l'au-delà d'après l'*Apologie* platonicienne', *Les Études Classiques* 18 (1950), pp. 269–284.

[19] "It stands to reason that the human intellect is only a tiny part of the intellect that exists," as phrased by Leo Strauss, *Xenophon's Socrates* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1972), p. 23.

[20] Burnyeat, 'The impiety of Socrates', p. 10, in, by his own admission, a flamboyant statement, says that if the gods had abided by the Socratic requirements, there would not have been the Trojan war, without which, presumably, "Greek culture would have been impossible and, in consequence, Western civilization would not be what it is today," which is a groundless but impressive-sounding statement. A similar level of historiosophical insight is in Orson Welles' memorable adage in *The Third Man* about Switzerland's 500 years of democracy and peace that produced only the cuckoo clock, whereas thirty infamous years under the Borgias produced the Renaissance.

do only what is right (*Ap.* 28b,d, 29b; *Cr.* 48cd, 49b) since everyone wants happiness (*Ap.* 25b; *Cr.* 48b; *Eud.* 281de) which is possible only when right things are done (*Ap.* 28b,d, 30ab; *Cr.* 48cd). However, one must know what is right (*Ap.* 29d–30a), which can be accomplished through philosophy (*Ap.* 29d–30b; *Cr.* 46b–48d) and divination (*Ap.* 33c). Socrates himself "obeys a divine command to philosophize" (*Ap.* 28de, 23b, 29ab, 30ab, 33c, 37e–38a).[21] Man should philosophize through "oracles and dreams and in every other way in which a divinity (θεία μοῖρα)[22] has ever commanded a man to do anything" (33c). He will do it even if death awaits him (29c, 28e, 30ab), even if he can be physically harmed (29d). This task was given Socrates by God through the Pythia (20e), whereby he "helps God" (23b), and his activity is "according to God" (22a, 23b).

As gods do only good (*Eu.* 12e–15a), and never deceive anyone (*Ap*. 21b), so we should not do otherwise. Because not even gods, and especially gods, can repay an injury for an injury, *lex talionis* is abolished. We should do no injustice, no evil, and restrain ourselves from an urge for revenge (*Cr.* 48b–49d, 54c). Athenians would see this as a very strange view. By espousing it, are we not depriving ourselves of the goods that the enemy would like to see us deprived of, asks Crito (45c–46a).

All these lofty goals may not come easily. As a quotation from Hesiod indicates, "Wickedness can be had easily and in abundance; smooth is the road and very close it dwells. But in front of virtue the immortal gods put sweat: long and steep is the path to it and rough at first" (*Mem.* 2.1.20). Moreover, "of all things good and fair the gods give nothing to men without toil and effort. If you want the favor of the gods, you must worship the gods" (2.1.28).

The argument from design has another consequence. The cosmos is the best possible design, and it is designed with man's happiness in mind. This is an indication of God's care, and even more, God's love for his creation. The gods are characterized as man-loving (φιλανθρωπία, 4.3.5,7).[23] God is characterized as an animal-loving (φιλόζῳος) creator (1.4.7).[24] Anaximander's divine *Apeiron* and Heraclitus' divine Logos are divinities because they are immortal, just, and self-sufficient. Socrates – if only tacitly – adds another attribute to God, namely love. To be sure, traditional gods loved mortals, but their love was self-interested and indulgent, leading to the procreation of demigods. Such love was one reason why traditional gods were found unpalatable for many. However, philosophers before Socrates excluded the characteristic of love in their concept of the divine; Socrates, on the other hand, reverts to it.[25] But to him, love is for

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[21] The commitment to live life like a philosopher as ordered by God (28e) is believed to be an expression of the view that "the ideal of man should be to search for wisdom and thus inevitably to imitate God," Robert Joly, 'Les origines de l'ὁμοίωσις θεῷ', *Revue Belge de Philologie et d'Histoire* 42 (1964), p. 94.

[22] For Socrates, θεία μοῖρα becomes synonymous with θεός, Edmund G. Berry, *The Historical Development of the Concept of θεία μοῖρα and θεία τύχη Down to and Including Plato* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Libraries, 1940), pp. 43, 47.

[23] It is even more significant that Euthydemus derives this conclusion to which Socrates' discourse leads.

[24] Socrates lets Aristodemos derive this conclusion.

[25] In this sense, it is true that "Socrates discovers ethical imperatives and absolutes at the core of religious mythology," Paul W. Gooch, *Reflections on Jesus and Socrates: word and silence* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996), p. 142.

love's sake, for the sake of the loved, love that radiates and expects little. Needless to say that in the hands of Plato this idea will acquire new heights.

The view of a loving God has a consequence for ethics. The human soul is the greatest good, and one should care for it the most. But this is not a narcissistic, self-directed ethics. Man should care for someone else's soul just as much as for his own. Just as God expresses his love in his creation, man should express his love in his dealings with others. In these dealings, a concern and care for others should be expressed only because this is a good thing to do. For Socrates, the "link between our good and that of others is made non-contingent through devotion to a disinterestedly benevolent God who, being already perfect, does not require from us any contribution to his own well-being but only asks each of us to do for other persons what he would be doing for them himself if he were to change places with us."[26] Socrates is ready for any inconvenience, including death, to make it a reality because such behavior has divine sanction, because such life is divinely prescribed. Therefore, he does not shun from saying to the jurors that he will obey God rather than them, which is done for their own benefit, since his task is to exhort all people so that they care for the best possible state of their souls (*Ap.* 28e, 29d–30a, 30e). Obedience to the perfect and benevolent God can be good and thus advantageous to everyone concerned. Socrates' life becomes the life of piety, of realizing what is dear to God and thereby serving others. This ethics and this way of life becomes convincing when it is founded on the Socratic theology of the one perfect God who creates a harmonious universe for which he selflessly cares. Driven by sincere faith in such a God, Socrates uses his intellectual powers to lead in the direction of such theology and the morality that stems from it.[27]

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[26] Gregory Vlastos, *Socrates: ironist and moral philosopher* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991), p. 177. It is so because, as loftily phrased, Socrates' God is considered as "the first principle of all beings, as the father and providence present in human life speaking in the conscience of everyone and inspiring in the man of good will a sacred enthusiasm for the good," Charles Waddington, *Pyrrhon et le pyrrhonisme* [1876], in his *La Philosophie ancienne et la critique historique* (Paris: Hachette, 1904), p. 285.

[27] If we remove from Socrates "his overwhelming faith in God, Socrates transforms himself into a clever elenchical and dabbling dilettante, comparable to some of our own language philosophers who deal with words, words, and nothing but words," Luis E. Navia, *The Socratic Presence* (New York: Garland, 1993), p. 298.

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Chapter 11

Antisthenes

Monotheism

A remarkable report states that "in Antisthenes' *Physicos* it is said that there are many gods according to the laws [of men], but according to nature [there is only] one" (Philodemus, *De pietate* 7 = fr. 39A);[1] the report is not isolated since we also read that "Antisthenes, in his book entitled the *Physicus*, by saying that there is one God in nature as opposed to the many in popular belief, deprives the gods of their power and nature" (Cicero, *ND* 1.32 = fr. 39B); a similar statement is made by Minucius Felix (*Octavius* 19.7 = fr. 39C) and Lactantius (*Div. inst.* 1.5.18–19 = fr. 39D; *De ira Dei* 11.14 = fr. 39E); however, Lactantius also says that this one God is "the artificer of all things (*artifex summae totius*)" (*Div. inst.* 1.5.18–19).[2]

The mention of "the artificer" is dismissed as "conjured up by the mention of Plato's *Timaeus* in *De Nat Deor* 1.13.31," a presumed source for Lactantius.[3] The *Timaeus* is mentioned by Cicero in two paragraphs (1.18, 1.30) and God as *aedificator mundi* is mentioned much earlier than Antisthenes (1.18 vs. 1.32). If Lactantius used Cicero as a source when writing his work, it is hard to imagine how he could attach to Cicero's report on Antisthenes a phrase about the artificer which vaguely resembles the *aedificator* phrase used several pages earlier unless he wrote from memory and conjoined the report about Antisthenes with the paraphrased *aedificator* phrase. But such confusion on Lactantius' part, although possible, is highly conjectural. Therefore, it seems very likely that the artificer statement comes from another source.

From Clement we also learn that not only Plato but many others also declare the one true God to be God by his own inspiration. "Antisthenes has seen this not as a Cynic, but as someone associated with Socrates: 'God does not resemble anything and no one can know him by means of an image.'"[4]

Antisthenes sees God as one, sharing his divine status with no other divine beings. Therefore, the traditional mythology must be dismissed as the inadequate account of the sphere of the divine. It is uncompromising monotheism which sees

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[1] Fragments are numbered according to Fernanda Decleva Caizzi, *Antisthenis fragmenta* (Milan: Cisalpino, 1966).

[2] Philodemus, Cicero, and Lactantius seem to refer to Antisthenes' work *On nature* listed by Diogenes Laertius (DL 6.17 = fr. 1), Andreas Patzer, 'Antisthenes der Sokratiker: das literarische Werk und die Philosophie, dargestellt am Katalog der Schriften', Ph.D dissertation (Ruprecht-Karl-Universität in Heidelberg, 1970), pp. 116, 151; Aldo Brancacci, 'La théologie d'Antisthène', *Philosophia* 15–16 (1985–86), pp. 219–220.

[3] H.D. Rankin, *Antisthenes Sokratikos* (Amsterdam: Hakkert, 1986), p. 89.

[4] Clement, *Protrep.* 6.71.1–2 = fr. 40B; *Strom*. 5.108.4 = fr. 40A; Eusebius, *Praep. ev.* 13.13.35 = fr. 40C; Theodoret, *Graec. aff. cur.* 1.75 = fr. 40D.

no place for other divine beings, even created by God, as later presented by Plato in the *Timaeus*. The gods of popular beliefs are dissolved by losing their power and nature. If the nature of the gods – immortality, immense powers, immeasurable knowledge, an ability to transform themselves into different visible forms, and an ability to change place instantaneously or at least very quickly – is abolished, what is left are, at best, natural phenomena or people, ordinary by their nature but extraordinary by their deeds and status and thereby divinized. In this, Antisthenes follows the tradition of Xenophanes and the Sophists in their criticism of traditional religion.[5] He also follows Xenophanes and the Sophists – at least, Protagoras – in their agnosticism. However, it is not a complete agnosticism such as appears to be the case for Protagoras who claims that he is not even able to state whether the gods exist or not. Antisthenes does not have such hesitations about the existence of the one God. He also states that God cannot be known through the means of images, but this belief opens the possibility that God can be known, say, through inspiration or revelation – as appears to be the case for Xenophanes.[6] Except for God's existence, at least one more positive statement can be made about God, namely, that he is an artificer of the universe. God made the world from, presumably, coeval matter. No Greek philosopher ventured to state that the world was created *ex nihilo*, and it can be assumed that Antisthenes did not make such a pronouncement either. Had he done so, we can be quite certain that the statement would have been recorded.

In his view of God as the craftsman, Antisthenes adumbrates the view eloquently presented in the *Timaeus*, but he is not unprecedented in such statements. Anaximander's divine *Apeiron* is the source of the world through the mechanism of separation and destruction, and the events in the world are guided by the *Apeiron*, to whom is due the orderliness of the world. The source of this orderliness is in Logos according to Heraclitus, in the Holy *Phren* according to Empedocles, and in *Nous* according to Anaxagoras.

At first blush, Antisthenes' stance on religious matters in life seems to be rather antagonistic. He ridiculed orphic mysteries (DL 6.4 = fr. 162). To the priests of Cybele who asked for alms, he said, "I don't feed the mother of the gods, whom the gods feed" (Clement, *Protrep.* 7.75.3 = fr. 161). But because of his belief in the one God, it would be difficult to expect of him reverence for divinities recognized by traditional religion. However, these divinities should not be dismissed altogether but considered in a proper light as traces of traditional wisdom conveyed in an allegoric form. Antisthenes was known for his use of myth, for he "expressed himself through myths" (Julian, *Or.* 7.209a = fr. 8A, 7.215c = fr. 8B), in particular, to discuss ethical issues (7.217a = fr. 8C) in which the myth was taken to mean "an obvious allegory (speaking in riddles, αἰνιττόμενος)" (7.219b, 221c). This can be gleaned from Antisthenes' reading of Homer.

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[5] A connection between Xenophanes and Antisthenes had already been clear for Minucius Felix, *Octavius* 19.7.

[6] By denying the possibility of knowing God through images, Antisthenes seems not only to direct his criticism against traditional religion, but also against Democritus and his view of the gods as the *eidola*, Brancacci, 'La théologie d'Antisthène', pp. 227–228.

Antisthenes is reported to have theorized that Homer said some things according to opinion (τὰ δόξῃ), others according to truth (τὰ ἀληθείᾳ), but he did not develop this theory which was done by Zeno who wanted to reconcile some contradictory statements of Homer (Dio Chrysostom, *Or.* 53.5 = fr. 58). Allegorical interpretations of traditional religion were made by the Stoics, but it is uncertain to what extent Antisthenes did that. Did he limit himself only to the statement that some things in Homer are true and some are not because they are a matter of opinion? If so, what would be so interesting in Antisthenes' statement? Xenophanes criticized Homer and Hesiod because they "ascribed to the gods all [acts] that are to people disgraceful and shameful" (21B11), but he also stated that "it is always good to have regard for the gods" (21B1.24). This means that not everything is wrong in what the poets said about the gods. Xenophanes seems to opt for rectification of the concept of the divine by rejecting anthropomorphic elements from traditional religion as depicted by the poets. This solves the problem of contradictions in Homer but hardly through the means of reconciling them. Reconciliation of contradictions in Homer can be done by interpretation, presumably allegoric interpretation, of Homer's pronouncements. This interpretation is done in light of the opinion–truth distinction, that is, in light of the decision of what is the nature of the divine based on some theological assumptions. These assumptions direct the reader of Homer to interpret some parts literally, other parts metaphorically. Implicitly, and certainly in an undeveloped form, the opinion–truth distinction has already been made by Xenophanes, but he is not seen as a forerunner of Zeno. Antisthenes is considered a precursor of the Stoics[7] because, presumably, he conjoined the truth–opinion distinction with the idea of using it for an interpretation of the epic poetry of Homer. Admittedly, this is only a supposition since Dio Chrysostom's mention of Antisthenes does not explicitly state that he was involved in interpretation of Homer, but this does not justify an arbitrary claim that "Antisthenes has nothing to do with allegoric exegesis of Homer."[8] Maybe Dio Chrysostom did not have to mention it, maybe it was common knowledge that the author of numerous works on Homer and Homeric topics ventured into non-literal interpretation of Homer – even if theory of this interpretation was not as fully developed as it presumably was done by Zeno.

None of the Homeric works of Antisthenes are preserved, and thus there is not much that we know today about how Antisthenes envisioned allegorical reading of Homer. There is one example preserved by Porphyry. In a description of a feast, Homer says that old Nestor lifts a cup of wine filled to the brim without any effort, whereas others have problems with it. How is it that only Nestor was capable of doing it? According to Antisthenes, the poet "does not speak (οὐ λέγει) here about physical weight [of the cup] but he wants to say (σημαίνει) that [Nestor] was not drunk: in fact, he held wine very well" (Porphyry, *Ad Iliadem* 11.636 = fr. 55). It is arguable whether we have here any allegory at all, but certainly there is a distinction made between a literal meaning in the words of the poet and a deeper meaning.

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[7] Paul Barth and Albert Goedeckemeyer, *Die Stoa* (Stuttgart: Frommann, 1941), p. 21; Ragnar Höistad, *Cynic Hero and Cynic King* (Uppsala: Karl Bloms Botkrycker, 1948), p. 193.

[8] Michael Hillgruber, 'Dion Chrysostomos 36 (53), 4–5 und die Homerauslegung Zenos', *Museum Helveticum* 46 (1989), p. 23.

The deeper meaning in this example is hardly impressive:[9] someone who lifts a full cup can be expected to be sober, but it is possible that even an inebriated person is capable of such a feat; therefore, the poet, according to Antisthenes, with his word gives a sign of the former possibility (Nestor's soberness) rather than the latter (his intoxication). In fact, the meaning would be slightly deeper if Nestor were drunk and yet lifted the cup without difficulty since that would indicate his self-control even under the influence of alcohol. But there is no trace of such an interpretation in the quoted scholion. Therefore, it is an over-interpretation of the fragment to state that Antisthenes meant to point to moral strength as intended in Homer's description[10] or to Nestor's ability of self-control.[11] But it is clear that Antisthenes made a distinction between what is said and what is intended by some words. This important distinction had already been made by Heraclitus when he said that "the lord whose oracle is in Delphi neither speaks (λέγει) nor conceals but gives a sign (σημαίνει)" (Plutarch, *De Pyth. or.* 404d = B93).[12] Generally, a deeper meaning not only can be concealed thus by the poet for literary purposes, but also it may be difficult if not impossible to express this meaning in language. This is the case with any description of God. Being unlike any form, he is beyond description; as a transcendent being, he is unapproachable by human means and so human description is necessarily distorted. This description can point to this being with words, but these words ought not to be considered as a literal description of divinity. In this way, religious descriptions offered by traditional mythology are but a hint of the divine, not an adequate account of the domain of the divinity. Mythological traditions have deeper meaning since they are "obscure and poetic forms of wisdom of first ages."[13] They are not altogether worthless because they direct men toward the divine, but they should be treated with caution by everyone and not be considered as an ultimate statement of the state of affairs in the sphere which surpasses our abilities to describe it.

However, mythology must not be considered as an unqualified repository of the signs of true God. It may include elements which should not be there at all and are misleading, even harmful. For this reason, Antisthenes does not shrink from saying that if he could catch Aphrodite, he would pierce her with arrows for corrupting too many fine women since *eros* is the vice of nature and a divine malady, and one should not submit himself to a pleasure even if it is called divine. However, the existence of *eros* is not altogether evil because this is God's necessary gift for procreation (Clement, *Strom*. 2.107.2–3 = fr. 109a). Divinization of *eros* is an erroneous accretion of traditional religion due to misperception of its true nature

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[9] Putting aside scholarly decorum, one can, not entirely unjustifiably, state that this interpretation is a "piece of silliness," J. Tate, 'Antisthenes was not an allegorist', *Eranos* 51 (1953), p. 18; on the other hand, had we known the contents of his work *On the use of wine or on drunkenness or on the Cyclops* (DL 6.18 = fr. 1), we would probably see that as a context in which the Nestor fragment would acquire a truly deeper meaning, all the more since the work includes certain tokens (σύμβολα) of Dionysus (Aelius Aristides, *Or.* 49.33 = fr. 41).

[10] Luis E. Navia, *Antisthenes of Athens* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 2001), p. 44.

[11] This is possible in light of Nestor's "contrast with the Cyclop[s] who gets intoxicated," Ragnar Höistad, 'Was Antisthenes an allegorist?', *Eranos* 49 (1951), p. 29.

[12] Navia, *Antisthenes of Athens*, p. 45.

[13] Charles Chappuis, *Antisthène* (Paris: Durand, 1854), p. 82.

and, possibly, to indulgence. However, *eros* as such, when used wisely, should not be abandoned as the vice of nature it is, but treated as an indispensable element in perpetuating the human race. In this sense, at least to some extent, Antisthenes could subscribe to the statement that traditional religion is "an ensemble of fictions and symbols to which arrived the imagination of the first men. Their gods were only natural forces or human passions divinized by ignorance and folly."[14] If the realization that mythological images should be allusions to the one God and not a place for elevating to divine status unpalatable elements of nature is lacking, then religion is but a collection of fictions. However, religion may become an ennobling element of human life if it is considered a repository of intimations into the transcendental, if natural life is seen as God's gift. Then, even vices of nature, such as *eros*, can be seen in a proper light and therefore properly used. For this reason, even a sage should get married but solely for the reason of procreation (DL 6.11 = fr. 115).

Socratic strength

Antisthenes' monotheistic statement is remarkable, and it would be difficult to believe that it was issued light-heartedly and did not have any relevance to his other views or to his way of life. It is interesting that he started his philosophical endeavors with Gorgias but was apparently disenchanted with Gorgias' cut-and-dry rhetoric exercises and arid views and moved to Socrates although it was at a considerable personal cost[15]; walking 40 stades from Piraeus to Athens every day to hear his master (DL 6.2 = fr. 128A) was no small feat. Apparently, Antisthenes found Socrates' views appealing because they were theologically saturated, Socrates' theology had a strong monotheistic tendency, and his ethics had theological underpinnings.

When asked what he would teach his son, Antisthenes said: "philosophy, if he should live with the gods, rhetoric, if he should live with people" (Stobaeus 2.31.76 = fr. 173). It is fairly clear that he makes here a distinction between the Sophists and Socrates: the former concentrate on something that can endear them to men, Socrates devotes his life to the pursuit of knowledge and truth, which inevitably leads to the divine. In this Socratic statement, Antisthenes mentions gods, not one God, which may simply be the result of "placing himself in the cultural framework of the person he is speaking to."[16] If the interlocutor was not a committed monotheist, a reference to one God would require a long theological introduction which may not have been necessary for the problem at hand: the problem was how to educate children. When pursuing philosophy, one can be assured – Antisthenes may say – that monotheism would be a conclusion of philosophical reflection. The child should be channeled into the proper

[14] Ibid., pp. 82–83.

[15] The style of Gorgias was detectable in Antisthenes' works, but not in his views (DL 6.1 = fr. 7); in fact, Antisthenes criticized Gorgias' views in the dialog *Archelaos* (fr. 42), Klaus Döring, 'Antisthenes: Sophist oder Sokratiker?', *Siculorum Gymnasium* 38 (1985), 240, 242 note 18.

[16] Marie-Odile Goulet-Cazé, 'Religion and the early Cynics', in R.B. Branham and M.-O. Goulet-Cazé (eds), *The Cynics* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), p. 69.

area of study to reach that conclusion. Rhetoric with its flippant emphasis on the ability to argue on two opposite sides of an issue hardly can be the proper way.

Piety was not a marginal issue for Antisthenes since "those, who want to become immortal, he said, should live piously and justly" (DL 6.5). Justice and piety are juxtaposed and thereby very closely related to the point of identifying them, which is reflected in the juxtaposition of their opposites in the title of his work *On injustice and impiety*.[17] Piety is not expected to be of traditional form, that is, the form of rites, offerings, and visiting sacred sites. Piety is a way of life, life guided by justice.[18] Just as one God should not be sought in the laws of men, real justice cannot be found in these laws, either. This elevation of justice above the laws of men is reinforced by a similar elevation of *arete*. Antisthenes stated that "whatever thing a sage does, he is guided by all of *arete* just like Athena admonished Ares three times" (Anonymous scholion, *Ad Il.* 15.123 = fr. 56). Moreover, "the sage should govern not according to the established laws, but according to the law of *arete*" (DL 6.11 = fr. 101). Also, "only those who possess *arete* are noble" (DL 6.10 = fr. 69). Just like *physis* is contrasted with *nomos* in the theological fragment about one God, so is the law of *arete*, or simply *arete*, set against established, conventional laws. A sage must draw his wisdom from what surpasses conventionality, from what remains immutable, notwithstanding vicissitudes of political and social changes in human societies. Plato could direct his rulers-philosophers to immutable ideas and memories of these ideas in their minds. Antisthenes rejected the concept of ideas and advocated restrictive nominalism. Where could he send his sage to find the truth, to learn *arete*? We can only guess his answer. In setting piety, justice, and *arete* on the same plane,[19] he directs the sage to the extra-conventional sphere, to reality itself, to the reality which has a theological dimension. God is the source of knowledge, and if the sage does not have a mystical contact with God to acquire truth, if he is not directly guided to it like Parmenides by a goddess, he has in himself a divine spark – an ability which, if properly used, enables him to find the knowledge sought. What is this ability? Antisthenes says that "*arete* is self-sufficient (αὐτάρκης) for happiness, having need of nothing but Socratic strength (Σωκρατικὴ ἰσχύς); *arete* is [in the realm] of actions and does not need many arguments or theories" (DL 6.11 = fr. 70). The Socratic strength is probably the same strength that can be found in Antisthenes' hero, Heracles, as summarized in the title of his work, *Heracles or on wisdom (phronesis)*

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[17] It is just as good a guess as any to state that in this work "perhaps he identified them [injustice and impiety] and showed that to act in conformity to *arete* is to obey orders of God and thereby even honor him," Chappuis, *Antisthène*, p. 35.

[18] In this sense it would be true that "an ideal, true Cynic (*Kyniker*) is a cynic (*Zyniker*) because of piety"; Helmut Rahn, 'Die Frömmigkeit der Kyniker', *Paideuma* 7 (1959–1961), p. 291. The author bases his conclusion of testimonies of Themistius and Julian, making little use of information on early Cynics. A philosophic kind of piety, "unlike that of his age," is admitted for Antisthenes by Goulet-Cazé, 'Religion and the early Cynics', pp. 69, 79; the importance of the problem of piety for Antisthenes is recognized by Döring, 'Antisthenes: Sophist oder Sokratiker?', pp. 238–239.

[19] Antisthenes "puts ἀρετή on precisely the same plane as φύσις in contrast with the law," Höistad, *Cynic Hero*, p. 113.

or strength (DL 6.18 = fr. 1).[20] This ability, the Socratic strength, is a reminiscence of the *daimonion* which can only be of divine provenance. After all, God is the artificer of all things. Although this ability is universal, it is not universally used. Although *arete* of a man and a woman is the same (DL 6.12 = fr. 72), all men and women are not sages.[21] This is a rare phenomenon. This is something which is developed by the pious, therefore, by the just, therefore, by the virtuous. Theology is not far away from practical issues; religion is not insignificant. Religious life, pious life is the source of justice and *arete* and thus it is the life of a sage. Only such a sage can become a ruler (Augustine, *De civ. Dei* 18.41 = fr. 102); only such a sage can become a politician worthy of being a ruler. Clearly, in this view, Antisthenes agrees with Plato who says that cities are properly ruled only by philosophers (*Rep.* 473c).

The cure of human problems can be found in education because *arete* acquires an all-important prominence in Antisthenes' philosophy. For him, "the purpose of life is to live in accordance with *arete*" (DL 6.104 = fr. 22); Antisthenes identified the greatest good with *arete* (*virtus*, Augustine, *De civ. Dei* 8.3 = fr. 111A); and through inner *arete* man can become happy (Augustine, *De civ. Dei* 18.41 = fr. 111B); but most importantly, "*arete* can be taught … and once learned it cannot be lost" (DL 6.105 = fr. 23). If only philosophers could become the rulers, we may assume that they would so direct the affairs of the state that the goal of developing *arete* in each citizen would become a reality. Such an education would direct the minds of the citizens toward a higher plane. According to Antisthenes, "Prometheus said to Heracles: Your manner of acting is deplorable: you worry about temporal things and you do your best to neglect what is more important. But you are not an accomplished man until you learn what surpasses men and when you learn that, you will also learn what is human. But when you learn only what is human, you will go astray like savage beasts" (Themistius, *De virtute* (Syr.) = fr. 27). What surpasses men is the sphere of the divine, and if one learns that, his life becomes truly human. The realization that what surpasses men is not the world of immortal-but-fickle gods, but one God, who created the world, can enrich human life with meaning and purpose. This possibility is available to everyone through the Socratic strength which everyone possesses but not everyone exercises to the same extent. The ruling philosophers would presumably create a social atmosphere conducive to blossoming Socratic strength and developing *arete*.

That Antisthenes was interested in analysis of social, political, and economic issues is testified to by the titles of some of his works (DL 6.16). He was not averse to participation in political life, but warned the willing participant that political life is like playing with fire: one can easily get scorched (Stobaeus 4.4.28 = fr. 168), but, presumably, one can do a lot of good, too, especially a philosopher, the one governed by *arete*, the one who is able to see everything in a theological perspective. Therefore, the statement that "Antisthenes belongs in the tradition of the 'playful'

[20] Cf. Höistad, *Cynic Hero*, 36. Antisthenes discusses in this work *ischus*, strength of the soul, "the supreme virtue of which Heracles was the model and the personification," Chappuis, *Antisthène*, p. 30.

[21] "To say that the virtue of men and women is identical in kind does not necessarily imply that they are equal in quantity," observes Doyne Dawson, *Cities of the Gods* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), p. 135.

utopia" since he was primarily interested in the individual[22] is only partially justified. For Antisthenes, the individual was his priority, the utopia only a means. His utopia was to be a tool for individual improvement, but the utopia should not thereby be reduced to the level of a plaything. It can be argued that Plato's goal was the same, as well, but hardly anyone would consider his utopia playful.

What should a believer in one God think about life after death? There is no direct statement pertaining to Antisthenes' eschatology. However, for him the soul is more important than the body, and thus "it is better, says Antisthenes, to fall a prey of ravens than into the clutches of flatterers since the former destroy the inert body, whereas the latter ruin the living soul" (Stobaeus 3.14.17 = fr. 84B). Soul constitutes the essence of humanness. Therefore, Antisthenes can believe that he, a man of very modest means, is rich because "people have in their souls, not in their houses, riches and poverty" (Xenophon, *Symp.* 4.34 = fr. 117). The greatest happiness is to die happy (DL 6.5 = fr. 164), and, in the Socratic spirit, life becomes a preparation for death. "Those, who want to become immortal, he said, should live piously and justly" (DL 6.5). Does immortality here merely mean man's reputation? Possibly, however, it is not impossible that literal life after death is meant.[23] When commenting on Homer's description of Patroclus' appearance to Achilles, he says that the form of the soul is similar to the form of the body (Anonymous scholion, *Ad Il.* 23.65 = fr. 57). Was this just a trite statement in which Achilles was able to recognize Patroclus because his soul looked like Patroclus? That much already Homer says: "the soul of Patroclus, all in his likeness for stature, and the lovely eyes, and voice, and clothing" (*Il.* 23.65–67). Antisthenes' statement can be worth quoting by the scholiast if it does not mean that the soul after death is similar to the body just for Homer, but the soul is similar to the body in reality, not only for Homer. This would indicate Antisthenes' belief in life after death, life of the more important part of being human, the soul, still with its Socratic strength and *arete*; and because a person dies happy, the person may be assumed to live on happy in the afterlife, whatever and wherever that life may be.

Antisthenes' monotheism may appear to be undeniable, nonetheless, its importance was sometimes defused by seeing in it merely a deistic statement.[24] However, hardly any role for piety can be envisioned in a truly deistic way of life. For Antisthenes, the importance of piety in individual and social life seems uncontested. Also, Antisthenes' monotheism is sometimes included in the category of pantheism.[25] Pantheism, of course, is a monotheistic system, however, little seems to indicate that that is also Antisthenes' theology. Antisthenes' God does not resemble anything, but one would hardly say so about the universe. Greek pantheism seems to begin with the Stoics. It is also possible to see Antisthenes as a deistic pantheist;

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[22] Rankin, *Antisthenes Sokratikos*, p. 147.

[23] Cf. Chappuis, *Antisthène*, p. 84.

[24] Jacob Bernays, *Lucian und die Kyniker* (Berlin: Hertz, 1879), p. 31; Theodor Gomperz, *Greek Thinkers* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1905), vol. 2, p. 164.

[25] Paul Decharme, *La Critique des traditions religieuses chez les Grecs* (Paris: Picard, 1904), p. 218; Decleva Caizzi, see W.K.C. Guthrie, *A History of Greek P*hilosophy (Cambridge: University Press, 1969), vol. 3, p. 249 note 2.

because "philosophical pantheism or deism in antiquity was a cover for materialistic and atheistic ideas," Antisthenes' views are an expression of "a historically limited form of Cynic atheism."[26] It really requires great faith to see monotheism as a form of atheism. But even this curious interpretation does not deny that Antisthenes' theological stance is clearly and unequivocally monotheistic. It is the first time that a Greek writer professes monotheism so clearly.

[26] I.M. Nakhov, 'Nauka i religia v ideologii kinizma', in M.E. Grabar'-Passek (ed.), *Voprosy antichnoi literatury i klassicheskoi filologii* (Moscow: Nauka, 1966), p. 159.

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Chapter 12

Megarian Theology

One of the closest associates of Socrates was Euclides of Megara, which is indicated by the fact that he was present at the death of his master and, after his death, Socrates' disciples found refuge in Euclides' place in Megara (DL 3.6 = fr. 4A, DL 2.106 = fr. 4B). Euclides' philosophy, and the philosophy of his spiritual successors (there was never a formal Megarian school like the Academy, the Lyceum, or the Stoa) bears undeniable influence of Socrates, but it is primarily a renaissance of the Eleatic system.[1]

Euclides "showed that the good is one and is called by many names, one time prudence, another time God, sometimes mind, and so on. He suppressed the opposites of the good by saying that they do not exist" (DL 2.106 = fr. 24). What is the supreme good, *summum bonum*? According to Xenophanes, Parmenides, Zeno, and Euclides, "this is the sole good which is one, always alike and the same" (Cicero, *Acad.* 2.129 = fr. 26A), which is echoed in the statement – although oneness of the good is not mentioned – that for Euclides, "the supreme good is what is alike and always the same" (Lactantius, *Inst*. 3.12.9 = fr. 26B). Xenophanes, Parmenides, Zeno, Melissus, the school of Stilpo, and the Megarians reject the testimony of the senses and of appearance (*phantasiai*) and only trust the logos and say that "being is one and the other does not exist; also, absolutely nothing comes into being or is destroyed or moves" (Aristocles *ap.* Eusebius, *Praep. ev.* 14.17.1 = fr. 27). Fr. 26A concerns an ethical question about the nature of the good. Fr. 27 concerns an epistemological question about what cognitive apparatus should be used in acquiring knowledge and, consequently, what we really know.[2] The common ground between the two fragments, between ethics and epistemology, is ontology: the nature of reality determines what is good, the nature of reality determines how cognition is possible.

Megarian being is one – uncreated, eternal, unchangeable, indivisible, immobile. This is not just being, but the good, not even good being, but good itself. Why good? This is where the Megarians are heirs of Socrates. For Socrates, the problem of the good was critical. What is good? What are virtues? What are the signposts of good and virtuous living? What are the signs of God's beneficence toward men? Socrates frequently tantalized his interlocutors with his questions, frequently giving answers that were far from being full, clear, and satisfactory. A part of the problem is a relativistic approach: that is good which is useful and what is useful varies from one person to another, from one situation to another. Different things called good are not in themselves good by nature, but "if ignorance controls them, they are greater

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[1] Adam Drozdek, 'Euclides of Megara: God = *phronesis* = the good', *Acta Antiqua Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 45 (2005), pp. 27–34.

[2] Cf. Klaus Döring, *Die Megariker. Kommentierte Sammlung der Testimonien* (Amsterdam: Grüner, 1972), p. 83.

evils than their opposites … but if good sense and wisdom are in control, they are greater goods. In themselves, however, neither sort is of any value"; "of the other things, no one of them is either good or bad, but of these two, wisdom is good and ignorance is bad" (Plato, *Euthydemus* 281de).

Thus, the unsettling relativism concerning the good can be removed by establishing absolutes, and an extreme way of doing this is suggested by Parmenides: being itself is such an absolute, an absolute that does not admit anything beyond itself. If this being is identified with the good, then what better criterion of goodness can be found? As a side effect of this view, actions do not have to be judged at all because there are none. All motion is illusory, all change is nonexistent, ethical problems disappear, ethics is dissolved in ontology.

What exists is good, good is what exists and everything else is but an illusion, nonbeing, nonexistence. How is evil possible? It is not, it simply does not exist. With this concept of evil, Megarians open a new avenue for theodicy which later will be continued by Augustine, Malebranche, and Leibniz. Megarians state that the world, what exists, is fundamentally good, goodness is the essence of being and in that they found a follower in Plato and his idea of the good, the idea of ideas which is so crucial in the Platonic system that it is elevated above being.

Euclides says that the good or being is called *phronesis*, God, mind, or some other name. He did not mean Parmenides, whose being was simply called by Parmenides being. But there remains no other possibility; no one else is known to share Eleatic ontological views and use other names for being. What Euclides almost certainly means here is that these are names that could be used more fittingly as denominations of being although they were not so used by those for whom these names referred to the most important concepts in their systems.

The concept of Mind was central in the system of Anaxagoras. Mind's attributes are almost the same as the attributes of Megarian being, and so Mind can be considered another name for being. These attributes are also divine attributes and thus the Megarian being can be called God. But why *phronesis*?

For Socrates, virtue is knowledge. Knowledge is what unites cognition and ethics. People should care for their soul, and Socrates sees himself as setting people on the right path with the exhortation: "My friend … are you not ashamed of caring for money … honor and reputation while you do not care for nor give thought (φροντίζεις) to *phronesis* and truth and the soul and how to make it as good as possible?" (Plato, *Ap.* 29de, 36c). Taking care of the soul is concentrating on *phronesis* and truth. Through exercise of the *phronesis*, truth can be reached, through reaching the truth, soul can be improved as much as humanly possible.

The statement about the need of caring for one's *phronesis* is given right after saying that Athens has the greatest reputation for wisdom, and so such care should be natural in such a city. In a city known for *sophia*, *phronesis* really should be a primary preoccupation of all citizens. In this statement, *sophia* is used interchangeably with *phronesis*. When Socrates says that *sophia* is indisputably a good thing (*Mem.* 4.2.33), it may be assumed that the statement can be extended to *phronesis* as well. And this is not a good thing, but the only thing about which we can say that it is good, other good things being good for certain purposes only, good for some situations or some persons, bad for others. In this way, *sophia/phronesis* acquires an

absolute value and a position distinctly different from anything else. It is a small step now from "*phronesis* is good" to "*phronesis* = the good."

Also, God's highest cognitive faculty is *phronesis* through which God can be omniscient (*Mem.* 1.4.17) and since "nothing is stronger than *phronesis*" (Aristotle, *EE* 1246b34), the faculty is divine and if God is identified with his *phronesis* (just like Aristotle's God is identified with mind), the equation can be extended to God = *phronesis* = the good.

Phronesis also has a prominent role in Plato's philosophical system. Every person has a potential for *phronesis*; however, it requires a special educational effort to bring it to its fullness (*Rep.* 518e–519a, 530bc). It is best developed in a philosopher, constituting his specific characteristic through which he is able to fully control his pleasures and desires and thereby be a most suitable ruler of the city (412c, 431d, 521bc, 586d). Only through *phronesis* can that which is, true being, be learned (582c, 586a). However, it is not enough to know (*phronein*) something, even fully, and not to know (the idea of) the good (505b). In this way, *phronesis* is directly connected with the idea of the good, the source and cause of all true knowledge.

Because *phronesis* was such an important concept in the times of Euclides, it is not surprising that this importance is reflected in Euclides' statement about the names of being. *Phronesis* is not only the process of cognition, but also the result of the process. This is the highest form of cognition and, as such, fitting for God. God, a rational being, thinks about what is best to think about, namely the good, which is being, which is God himself.[3] The Megarian good is thus eternal God who ceaselessly thinks about himself (ceasing thinking even for a moment would mean a change in God) – the good itself eternally contemplating the good itself. Similar theology can later be found in Aristotle; however, the Aristotelian God is but a part of the universe, the mind which thinks about itself because there is nothing better than itself, so that this mind is unaware of the existence of the universe. Since there is nothing outside God in the Megarian universe, God possesses truly perfect knowledge because God knows everything about everything existing, that is, about himself. The Aristotelian God knows only himself, but it would be difficult to call this knowledge perfect if the existing universe is unknown to him. Aristotle proposes this solution to save God's perfection from being tainted by even a thought about something less perfect than himself. For Euclides, there is nothing less perfect than God, thus God does not miss anything in his thought process. Because everything else – particulars and evil – is nonexisting, God does not have to think about what does not exist. His thought is complete, comprehensive, perfect.

Euclides explicitly mentions God by making God one of the names of the good, of being. But what else, theologically, can that mean other than pantheism? There is nothing beyond being and that being is called God, which is a pantheistic solution, pure and simple.[4] With his mention of God, Euclides' system becomes a

[3] "The Megarian Being was a Reason which contemplated continuously its own complete immutable perfection," C.M. Gillespie, 'On the Megarians', *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie* 24 (1911), p. 221.

[4] Henne says in a roundabout fashion very much the same by stating that Euclides is a father of realism (Désiré Henne, *École de Mégare* (Paris: Joubert, 1843), p. 225) and that realism

theological commentary on the Parmenidean ontology. Parmenides never calls his being God although attributes of that being are divine (eternity, perfection) and thus being is God. Euclides just makes this theological aspect explicit. Mentioning God after *phronesis* as a possible name for the good may also mean that Euclides did not follow Socrates in giving high – the highest – status to theology.[5] Theology seems to have been for him of secondary importance, turning ethics to ontology and intelligence – *phronesis* – of the resulting being was his primary concern. Theology fits rather well in that image, but, in a way, it is a happy accident that being can also be called God.[6] This signifies the devaluation of theological and religious issues by the Megarians, which is carried to the extreme by Cyrenaics and Cynics. Only Antisthenes and particularly Plato continue among the Socratics to give theology the prominent position in their works.

After one agrees with the Megarian ontology that the good exists, how can knowledge of the good be applied in real life? The question was already asked by Aristotle, "It is hard to see how a weaver or a carpenter will be benefited in regard to his own craft by knowing the good itself" (*NE* 1097a8–9). Aristotle addressed the question to Platonism, but the question becomes more urgent, and interesting, in the case of the Megarian good. Because everything else beyond the good is an illusion, one way of answering the question is to say that the problem is just as illusory as what we would consider real life. This line of defense was well developed by the Megarians in the form of arguments presented in particular by Eubulides and Diodorus, arguments about the impossibility of motion and the problem of what is possible. Not surprisingly, the arguments resemble in spirit, and in contents, Zeno's *aporiai*, and, whether they were pronounced in all seriousness or just as eristic exercises,[7] these are not altogether trivial arguments.

One problem raised by the Megarians is the problem of possibility and necessity. Aristotle mentions that what is in act is possible, that is, what happens now, is possible (*Met.* 1046b29–32 = fr. 130A), which, as Aristotle subsequently states, leads to the denial of motion, which is exactly what the Megarians intended to do. The one being, the good, immutable and always identical to itself, is in the constant present. It is a timeless being for which making distinctions between before, now, and after are abolished. Therefore, statements about the present suffice, be they about the possible or otherwise. However, later, Diodorus Cronus amplifies the statement about possibility by also referring it to the future: what is or will be is possible. But, this raises a problem of destiny and freedom. The problem is explicitly mentioned by Plutarch in a rather condensed statement: How is Diodorus' theory of possibles compatible with the theory of destiny (*heimarmene*)?

originates in timid pantheism which is transformed into declared pantheism (p. 238).

[5] By itself, the order: *phronesis*–God–mind does not have to mean that *phronesis* is most important, God less important, mind even less. Cf. Paul's statement, "there remain these three: faith, hope and love, but the greatest of these is love" (1 Cor. 13:13) although love is listed at the end.

[6] It is thus justified to say that for the Megarians, God is a secondary form, just a name of a unity, as phrased by Henne, *École de Mégare*, p. 223.

[7] Already Plutarch stated that the Megarian problems were not treated seriously by them (*Adv. Col*. 1119c = fr. 197); the opinion is followed by Robert Muller, *Les Mégariques: fragments et témoignages* (Paris: Vrin, 1985), p. 14.

> For if there is no possible, [which is] what is or will be true, according to Diodorus, but all that which is capable of coming-into-being, even if that will not in fact come into being, is possible, there will be possible many things not determined by destiny. In the way that destiny loses that force immutable, invincible, superior to all or destiny as judged by Chrysippus, that capacity of coming-into-being will often become impossible. (Plutarch, *De Stoic. rep.* 1055de = fr. 134)

Chrysippus' concept of the possible – that which is capable of coming-into-being even if it will not, actually, come into being – is much less restrictive than the concept proposed by Diodorus – only what is or will be is possible. Therefore, if possible is what did not yet come to be, and even what may never come to be (Chrysippus), free will is autonomous and divine power has no limits. If possible is what is or will be (Diodorus), divine action is limited to current or future reality and free will is overridden by the laws of necessity.[8] The lack of personal freedom would have to be accepted by the Megarians in the light of their ontology. There is no room for accident, for randomness, for indeterminism in the Megarian universe. There is only one perfect immutable being and thus the desire for personal freedom is but an illusion to be suppressed. This attitude is exemplified by Stilpo.

Stilpo wanted to be free from desires and from external influences. Since the perceptible world is illusory, such influences should be treated as nonbeing. After the pillage of Megara, he said that he did not lose anything since no one took his knowledge away from him. Other losses simply did not count (DL 2.115–116 = fr. 151A; repeated many times, frs. 151B–I). Also, he said the immoral conduct of his daughter cannot disgrace him just as his behavior cannot honor her (DL 2.114 = fr. 153). The highest good is in the impassible soul (*animus impatiens*, Seneca, *Ep.* 9.1 = fr. 195), that is, in *apatheia* (9.2).

On the other hand, exigencies of everyday life require that some decisions have to be made about how to conduct this life. As it turns out, Stilpo was not altogether aloof from the life of the city. It is said that he was competent in politics (DL 2.114 = fr. 162) and that he was a priest. We have only glimpses about how serious he was about the priestly side of his life. Once Stilpo dreamt that "Poseidon [was] angry with him since he did not offer as sacrifice a bull as was customary among the priests; not frightened at all, he said to him: 'What do you say, Poseidon? Do you complain like a child that I didn't make an offering that filled the city with the smell of burned flesh but that I offer you moderately from what I have?' And it seemed to him that Poseidon smiled, extended his right hand and said that it is fit for the inhabitants of Megara to have an abundant crop of sardines" (Plutarch, *De perfectibus in virtute* 83c = fr. 159). Another time, Stilpo, after eating garlic, went to sleep in the temple of Cybele where it was prohibited to enter after having eaten [garlic]. The goddess appeared in his sleep and said "You are a philosopher, Stilpo, and you violate the laws," to which he responded "Give me something [else] to eat and I will never eat garlic"

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[8] M.C. Mallet, *Histoire de l'école de Mégare et des écoles d'Élis et d'Érétrie* (Paris: Maire-Nyon, 1845), pp. 117–118. In this way, Megarian philosophy exhibits "fatalism in all of its powers," as phrased by Henne, *École de Mégare*, p. 192. The Stoics had problems of their own with the question of human freedom; Chrysippus addressed the problem by making a distinction between destiny and providence.

(Athenaeus 10.422d = fr. 160). It is true that "these anecdotes attest a liberty of the tone of the Megarian in the area of traditional religion. But his attitude is not simply reduced to a destructive criticism, and it is not at all absurd to imagine that he really was a priest."[9] Consistency requires that Megarian ontology precludes an acceptance of the traditional gods. At best, Stilpo could believe in one God, who is the good. It is quite unthinkable that he would become a recognized priest of God understood in the Megarian fashion. It is, therefore, true that Stilpo's statements testify to his disbelief in polytheism and he is an atheist in the same sense as Socrates and Anaxagoras.[10] Therefore, Stilpo could justify – at least before himself – his priestly functions as a way of bringing people to the divine sphere of God through the traditional gods, which can be considered at best imperfect reflections of the Megarian God, and so, Stilpo could consider himself to be indirectly a priest of one God.

Gods are but reflections of the really existing God, reflections that do not really exist, and thus no real harm is done if, in the world that really does not exist, a priest serves gods that do not really exist.[11] If life is but a dream, it is fitting to be a priest of gods that are also only a dream. However, through logos, the Megarians know better, they know about the immutable God to whom they may attempt to direct minds of people.

[9] Muller, *Les Mégariques*, p. 164. Döring, *Die Megariker*, p. 144, believes that it is very unlikely that Stilpo was a priest, considering his attitude toward traditional cults.

[10] Mallet, *Les Mégariques*, p. 61.

[11] And so, Stilpo the priest could second Jeremiah's castigation about idol worshipping that people "burn their incense to a nothing" (Jer. 18:15) and agree with the psalmist that "all the gods of the nations are nothingness" (Ps. 96:5).

Chapter 13

Plato and the Demiurge

The reader of Plato's dialogs gets an impression that theological problems are very important for Plato; however, no dialog can be called theological. In no dialog can we find the systematic presentation of the nature and attributes of God and the gods; however, the supramaterial domain is very important and found in the discussion of ideas (forms), in the proofs of the immortality of the soul, and in the presentation of his cosmogony. Also, the emphasis placed on the extramaterial sphere becomes stronger and stronger, beginning from the discussion of particular concepts (piety, courage, and so on.) in early dialogs, through a description of knowledge that the guardians of Callipolis in the *Republic* should have, and through a description of the creation of the world in the *Timaeus*, to the theologically laden presentation of laws of Magnesia in the *Laws*. The role of theological discussion grows from somewhat accidental references to the gods to the recognition of the Demiurge as the creator of the world in the *Timaeus* and proofs for God's existence in the *Laws*. There are, however, questions which have always been discussed by Plato scholars, and it is difficult to see that ultimate solutions have been found. Is the Demiurge of the *Timaeus* identical with God of the *Laws*? Is the high status of the idea of the good in the *Republic* an indicator that it should be identified with God? Was Plato a monotheist? In this chapter, some of these issues will be addressed.

Theology?

The lack of systematic theological presentation in Plato's writings was interpreted in a variety of ways. It is said that, according to Plato, wisdom consists not in contemplation of intelligible beings, but in political action, and thus "Plato was not interested in pure metaphysics."[1] Although the *Laws* states that people "ought not to inquire concerning the greatest god and the universe nor busy themselves in searching for the causes, for it is impious" to do so, the statement seems to refer to popular opinion since, as the Athenian says in the next statement, about "a science considered noble and true … in no way it is possible not to say" anything (821ab), and undoubtedly the problem of the existence of God is such a science. Moreover, if people realize that "by nature God is worthy of all seriousness and blessed effort" (803c), how could they do it having no knowledge of the nature of the divine and God's attributes? Finally, members of the nocturnal council, the highest moral and legal authority in the state of Magnesia, had to have, first of all, solid knowledge in theological matters to properly fulfill their political and legal duties. Theology is the

[1] Olivier Reverdin, *La Religion de la cité platonicienne* (Paris: de Boccard, 1945), p. 41.

foundation of any activity, and thus it is difficult to agree that Plato was disinterested in theological matters.

Another reason why Plato was not perfectly clear about the problem of the nature of God was his concern about an impiety process.[2] Finally, Plato did not give a clear presentation of his theological views because, in the light of the novelty of his approach, he simply did not have a fully developed system in these matters, to which testify his statements in *Cratylus* (400d, 401a) and *Critias* (107a) that humans know next to nothing about the nature of the gods.[3]

It seems that the lack of clarity in Plato's writings concerning theological questions should be explained by the two latter reasons. Fear of the impiety process was not insignificant considering the fate of Plato's master. Socrates was a pious man who treated religious matters very seriously, so seriously, in fact, that he paid with his life by not avoiding the sentence by escaping from prison, which his pupils urged him to do. Monotheism in Plato's version was something new, and thus it was contrary to the established religious tradition of Athens; therefore, the possibility of an accusation of impiety was very real. A remark about ignorance as to the nature of the gods can be seen as a security measure concerning an accusation of impiety since, if it is stated that nothing can be known about the nature of the gods, the edge of novelty of theological views is certainly blunted.

Who is Plato's God? Some picture of Plato's understanding of the divine can be formed from dispersed remarks. Plato takes for his own "an old story" that "there is God who holds the beginning and end and middle of all existing things" (*Laws* 715e). God is called a king (904a), "supervisor of all things," in particular, of the state and perfection of the world (903b, 904a). God is the maker of animate nature, and changes in this nature are results of a cause which works "by *logos* and divine knowledge that come from God" (*Soph.* 265c). God is thus an intelligent being endowed with mind, and because mind dwells in the soul (*Philebus* 30c,e), God is also a soul. God, who is a living being (*Pol.* 271e), is a cause of regular motion of the world (269c) and only through his intervention can the order of nature left to itself be restored (273de). In this light, remarks in the *Republic* about "the maker of the senses" (507c) and "the maker of heaven" (530a) can be taken as allusions to God. God, Demiurge, steersman of all things, father (*Pol.* 269a, 270a, 272a, 273b,d) – these are God's denominations. And what is important is that God is a measure of all things, not man, as claimed by Protagoras (*Laws* 716c, *Theaet.* 152a).

It is sometimes believed that Plato identifies "the greatest god" with "the entire cosmos,"[4] which is not confirmed by the context since Plato says, "the greatest god and the entire cosmos" (821a), which does not point to identification but to separate discussion of the greatest god and the universe. Although it is true that in the last sentence of the *Timaeus* the world is called "a visible living being, a perceptible god, an image of the intelligible, greatest and best and most beautiful" (92c), the world as already born, cannot be a supreme divinity. Because the supreme divinity is not the

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2 Léon Robin, *Platon* (Paris: Alcan, 1938), p. 246.

3 John P. Rowan, 'Platonic and Christian theism', in S.A. Matczak (ed.), *God in Contemporary Thought* (New York: Learned Publications, 1977), p. 387.

4 Reverdin, *La Religion de la cité platonicienne*, p. 47.

same as the world, it is not true that according to Plato, "God should not be sought outside the world, but in the world."[5]

In this context, it is worthwhile looking into statements made in the *Sophist*, in which Plato asks a rhetorical question, "should we easily be persuaded that motion and life and soul and intelligence (φρόνησις) are not present in the absolute being (τὸ παντελῶς ὄν)?" (248e) and also states that "being and all (τὸ ὄν τε καὶ τὸ πᾶν)" consists of "things unmovable and in motion" (249d). Because τὸ παντελῶς ὄν and τὸ ὄν τε καὶ τὸ πᾶν are sometimes identified, "this being and this All, this universal being, is divine: it possesses life, soul, and thought. Therefore, the totality of the divine coincides with the totality of being."[6] *Non sequitur*. The statements from the *Sophist* are not easy to interpret, but it does not seem that a pantheistic interpretation is correct. The identification of being-and-all with absolute being does not lead to the conclusion that the whole of being is intelligent; Plato says that life, reason, and so on are in absolute being, not that they fill it entirely. Also, what possesses life, soul, and thought is divine and thus the Platonic world is full of gods. Living and thinking beings are divine, not because they are brought into being by God, but because they have attributes of God himself, a living and thinking being. Everything that lives and thinks has a mark of the divine, and thus is divine. However, this does not mean that it thereby becomes God; it is at best a god, but not God himself; it is a created god endowed with divine attributes by the Demiurge, but it is different from the eternal God. God makes the world and everything that is in it; he introduces order and harmony into prime matter, bringing into submission this matter which before was ruled by necessity. If this matter is considered a being, this being is undoubtedly not God. If it is assumed, as the *Timaeus* does, that being is only the world of ideas, then the totality of the divine is not the totality of being, since intelligent creations of the Demiurge would be excluded from it. However, it is difficult to admit such a possibility because, at the same time, it would have to be assumed that ideas are alive and have souls. However, an interpretation suggested by etymology is possible: τὸ παντελῶς ὄν means "the all-goal-oriented being," which allows us to treat it as "all-goal of reality."[7] This goal would be God who created everything most perfect and there is nothing more perfect than God himself. In this sense, God is the goal toward which strives the development of the created world, an omega point, as it were.

God and the idea of the good

As it is well known, Plato's epistemology is based on the ontological distinction between the eternal, intelligible world of ideas and the perceptible world, where the latter is a reflection of the former. The world of ideas is hierarchical with the idea of the good at the top. It is higher than other ideas since other ideas depend on it and "their being and essence" stem from it (*Rep.* 509b). The idea of the good cannot be

[5] Ibid., p. 49.

[6] Auguste Diès, *Autour de Platon. Essais de critique et d'histoire* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1927; reprinted New York: Arno Press, 1976), p. 559.

[7] Władysław Stróżewski, *Wykłady o Platonie. Ontologia* (Cracow: Uniwersytet Jagielloński, 1992), pp. 200, 205.

identified with knowledge and truth. The idea of the good, the good itself, enables cognition just as the sun makes seeing the world possible.[8] Without this idea there is no cognition, no truth, and so the good is above cognition and truth.[9] The idea of the good also enables the existence of things; their being stems from this idea, and so it is above being (ἐπέκεινα τῆς οὐσίας, 509b), although it is also called "the best *among* beings" (532c), the brightest [region] of being (τοῦ ὄντος τὸ φανότατον, 518c), and also the happiest being (526e).

What is the relation between God and the idea of the good? Plato nowhere makes a clear connection between the divine and the good. However, it needs to be noted that the beauty discussed in the *Symposium* seems to have a status comparable to the status of the good and is called divine (211e). On the other hand, Plato also speaks about the divinity of stars and souls, which means that stars are gods, but not that any of the stars is God.

First of all, what is the meaning of the statement that the idea of the good is above (or rather outside) being? The idea of the good undoubtedly has a different status from that of ideas and thus locating it beyond being may simply be a way of emphasizing its distinguished character, its priority among other ideas. After all, Plato calls it the *idea* of the good and thus, in respect to its essence, it is an idea, the brightest being in which being is either everything that exists – perceptible and intelligible, eternal and temporal, or only the world of ideas (in this sense, in *Tim.* 35a).[10] Hence, if the idea of the good is but an idea and the relation of God to this idea is under scrutiny, first, relation of God to any idea needs to be considered. Because God is an intelligent being, first the relation of mind, *nous*, to ideas should be analyzed.

It is believed that mind is an idea. It is said that, according to Plato, cognition is possible due to a similarity between the subject and the object of cognition and just

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[8] Therefore, the good can be called "the Sun of abstract entities, which gives the other forms their reality and goodness," Gerasimos Santas, *Goodness and Justice: Plato, Aristotle, and the moderns* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2001), pp. 186–187.

[9] Placing the good above knowledge also has practical consequence since in the state of Magnesia it is prohibited that any position should be held by someone who – in spite of great intelligence and knowledge, in particular, knowledge of what is good –hates and disdains it (*Laws* 689). The role of education is to make knowledge and the good go hand-in-hand (*Rep.* 519ab). This proves that, for Plato, moral dimension has a priority over rational dimension, which is justified by the ontological structure of reality.

[10] By the phrase "beyond being" "Plato simply means that the Good differs from the Other Ideas or Forms, not in kind, but in priority, perfection, and self-sufficiency, for the others depend upon it, whereas it depends upon nothing," Rowan, 'Platonic and Christian theism', p. 410. The expression "beyond being" means that "the other Forms owe their being (*ousia*) what they are (*einai*) – i.e., their being objective norms – to the presence of the Form of the Good. What they receive from the Good is not their being itself, but rather their being objective norms," Kenneth M. Sayre, *Plato's Literary garden: how to read a Platonic dialogue* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1995), p. 186. The statement that the good is beyond being only means that "whereas you can always ask the reason for a thing's existence and the answer will be that it exists for the sake of its goodness, you cannot ask for a reason for goodness; the good is an end in itself," Francis M. Cornford, *Plato and Parmenides* (London: K. Paul, Trench & Trubner, 1939), p. 132, which is approvingly quoted by Harold Cherniss, *The Riddle of the Early Academy* (New York: Russell & Russell, 1962 [1944]), p. 98 note 142.

as the eye would not see the brightness of the sun if it itself were not brightness, so the mind would not see an idea itself as not being an idea.[11] However, Plato says that the eye sees the sun since the sun is the cause of vision (*Rep.* 508b), which does not mean that the eye is brightness. Light connects the sense of sight with visibility, it enables vision of things; it moves, as it were, the ability to see built into the eye. Vision is impossible without light, without light the eye cannot fulfill its principal function and this dependence allows us to state that the eye is "most similar to the sun among organs of sense," but at the same time, neither vision nor the eye are the sun (508ab); the eye sees due to brightness, itself not being brightness. It is similar to mind – it sees truth thanks to the idea of the good, but it is not an idea because of it. The idea of the good can act in the mind because the soul in which the mind resides is "akin to the divine and the immortal" (611e), it is akin to being (490b), the being of the world of ideas, but this kinship lies in that mind is able to see when the idea of the good illuminates truth, when it allows mind to see the world of ideas. Without this illumination mind is blind, it is mind at its best potentially. Mind sees truth, that is, the ideas, itself being different from ideas. Only mind can contemplate them. If mind had been idea, truth would have cognized itself and idea would have cognized other ideas. Can such power be ascribed to an idea? Even the idea of the good that is above any other Platonic idea has no ability to reflect on another idea or on itself. The idea of the good enables cognition, itself not being a cognitive subject. The idea of the good is different from mind, mind is different from idea. The difference between the gods and ideas is shown particularly clearly by Plato in the *Phaedrus*, in which he speaks about a place "beyond heaven," in which there is "a being that really is, the subject of all true knowledge, visible only to mind, the soul's steersman," in which mind can see truth, in which mind can be saturated with true knowledge (247c–e).

Although both God and ideas are eternal and unchangeable, God is a personal being, ideas are impersonal objects of the intelligible world. They are paradigms, ideal models, but not causes of what exists. They can be considered causes only as final causes, but not efficient causes.[12] Because the ultimate efficient cause can only be mind and since mind dwells in soul, soul also can be considered such a cause.

Plato's statements do not permit mind and idea to be equated. The only exception can be the idea of the good – the idea of ideas that exists beyond being, the cause of existence of other ideas. Only with this idea can God or divine mind be identified. Many a time, such identification has been made, beginning with Plato's successors.

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[11] A.J. Fastugière, *L'Idéal religieux des Grecs et l'Évangile* (Paris: Lecoffre, 1981 [1932]), p. 48; this leads the author to the conclusion that soul is a number, p. 49, which is a bit of a hasty ascription of Pythagoreanism to Plato. A variation of this view is an opinion that God should be identified with "the intelligible order, Ideas, including the Good," C.J. de Vogel, 'What was God for Plato?' [1963], in her *Philosophia* I (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1970), p. 220.

[12] As expressed at the beginning of the sixteenth century by John Colet, for Plato, ideas, or "perfect things in nature ... appear to act of themselves alone and to change and form into their own likeness alien materials," but, in fact, they are only "the instruments of the divine skill and action," John Colet, *Commentary on First Corinthians* (Binghamton: Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, 1985), p. 261.

However, it seems that this identification is unfounded.[13] The idea of the good is an impersonal idea; being the essence of the good and enabling knowledge of truth, it is devoid of mind. The sun enables seeing things, itself not being the sight (508b). The sun gives light, itself being blind. The idea of the good enables seeing truth, itself – having no mind – being unable to see it. God is a rational being, God knows the truth due to the light shed by the idea of the good, but this idea seems to be not outside God in a sphere beyond being, but is an attribute of God himself. In that respect, God is self-sufficient: God has true knowledge since he is good and the good enables truthfulness of knowledge. The good also leads God to the act of creation of the world. God is God through blending of mind and good in one person, in himself; he is God since in him dwells the good proper and the mind proper. Goodness is the essence of God, therefore, when discussing the good, Plato discusses divinity; but this is not the whole of divinity, goodness does not exhaust everything that characterizes God. He is also the mind that knows the truth and through goodness in him, he is a creator of the world.

The primacy of the idea of the good means that other ideas depend on it, including their existence, which does not mean that they were created by it. The dependency is eternal, that is, the existence of ideas is maintained from eternity by the idea of the good, and had it been possible for that idea to disappear, other ideas would have disappeared along with it. This fact allows for the connection of the idea of the good with God, and thereby for ascribing to God a more transcendent character. Had ideas been completely independent of God, God would have been unable to make anything without accessing through his mind ideas as models. God would have been rational but without knowledge; he would have been intelligent without having any information. He would not have had any knowledge in himself since the whole of knowledge as dependent on ideas would have come from the outside. By associating God with the idea of the good, ideas become dependent on God himself and knowledge (ideas), although it exists outside God, is truly divine since without God it would not have existed.

Moreover, although existence of an idea depends on the idea of the good, we also read that the idea of bed ("the bed that really and in itself is") was created or made by God (*Rep.* 597c). And so, notwithstanding the constant stress put on the eternity of ideas, Plato remarks in passing that ideas (at least one of them) were created by God. One way of solving the difficulty is to reject one of the two statements and assume either that ideas, after all, are not eternal or that they were not created. Assuming their eternity is more appealing which is reflected in the statement that "we are justified in not taking too seriously Plato's description of God as making the Ideas."[14] But in this way, two things are rejected: that God did not *make* ideas and that *God* did not make ideas. It seems that by the association of the idea of the good with God and the difficulty with the identification of being made with being dependent can be avoided

[13] Verdenius even reduces God to a cosmogonic aspect of the idea of the good, W.J. Verdenius, 'Platons Gottesbegriff', in *Entretiens sur l'antiquité classique* (Geneva: Vandoeuvres, 1952), vol. 1, pp. 250–252; cf. J.B. Skemp, 'Plato's concept of deity', in *Zetesis* (Antwerpen: De Nederlandsche Boekhandel, 1973), p. 117.

[14] David Ross, *Plato's Theory of Ideas* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1953), p. 79.

by the following proposition: ideas are eternally dependent on the idea of the good and so on God, which means that their existence is eternally maintained by God, which is as though they were made by God.

How should the expression be understood that the idea of the good should be associated with God? As already mentioned, God was often identified with this idea. It seems, however, that the good is only an aspect and attribute of God-Demiurge.[15] Plato's God is not the One of Plotinus, nor an indivisible unity as later in Christian theology. Plato underlines the difference of the good in respect to other attributes. He says that as "the good is in the intelligible world … [so] the sun is in the visible world" (508b) and, as already emphasized, the sun is not the sight and the sight is not the sun. Similarly, mind is not the good and the good is not mind. Only much later, Aquinas will say that the substantial simplicity of God excludes substantial difference between his essence and attributes. For Plato, God cannot be identified with mind. Plato clearly distinguishes the good from knowledge (*Rep.* 509a), and the indivisibility of God is not a theological problem for Plato. His problem is unchangeability which allows him to argue for God's eternity.

God as the Demiurge

The *Timaeus* was probably the most discussed classical text, at least until the twelfth century, and the best known work of Plato. Interestingly, even Raphael showed Plato on his fresco *The Athenian School* with the *Timaeus* under his arm. The *Timaeus* is a cosmogonic work that presents basic elements of the universe before emergence of the world and the activity – direct and indirect – of the Demiurge that led to this emergence.

According to Plato's description, the world was not created out of nothing, but made from elements that existed coeternally with the Demiurge. Except for the Demiurge, there are also being, becoming, and space. We do not learn much about the Demiurge. The Demiurge is a perfect, unchangeable, immutable, living being, an author of perfection, beauty, and goodness. In one place the Demiurge is identified with eternal God (*Tim.* 34ab). He is the best cause (29a), the best among all intelligent and eternal beings (37a) and whatever he does is beautiful (28b). We should be satisfied with these remarks since "the father and the maker of all cannot be known and even if we knew him, we could not tell others" about it (28c). His nature is for humans, finite beings, unfathomable. With certainty we can say that the Demiurge is mind, which, in turn, is located in the soul (30b).

The Demiurge makes the world because he is good and desires to share this goodness; he wants everything to be as much like him as is possible (29e). The first impulse for making the world was not knowledge of the Demiurge, but his goodness. This goodness is a primary attribute of the Demiurge. It would be strange if the Demiurge's goodness, a cause of bringing the world into existence, were different from the idea of the good which is a foundation of truth, knowledge, and the world of

[15] As stated by Zeller in his lecture 'Die Entwicklung des Monotheismus bei den Griechen' [1862], "the good is the most significant attribute of God, through the good he built the world, with the good and wisdom he directs human destiny in the small and in the large," Eduard Zeller, *Vorträge und Abhandlungen* (Leipzig: Fues, 1875), p. 21.

ideas, from the good discussed in the *Republic*, from the good that is an ontological foundation of ethics.

The world was created according to an eternal model, which is a living being known only by mind, a being that includes all rational living beings, a being which is best and most perfect (30cd). What is this being? Its eternity and quintessence of rationality may indicate that it is the Demiurge himself.[16] However, already in the *Timaeus* Plato treats this being and the Demiurge as two different beings. It seems that the living being belongs to the world of ideas by being a model (form, idea) of all intelligence, including intelligence of the Demiurge. This does not mean that the mind of the Demiurge is derived from this idea and depends on it, but that the idea is coeval with the Demiurge; it exists outside God and is independent of God's essence of intelligence, which can be found in a concrete form also in God – as the good. The living being and the good are independent of one another, ontologically and causally, although they refer to the same thing, namely to intelligence (it seems that the good has wider scope since it is also causality, whereas the living being does not appear to be such). There remains a little step, not to the identification of the living being and the Demiurge but to making the former a part of the latter.

The living being belongs to the world of ideas, and in the *Timaeus* this world is called being. This being is unchangeable, indestructible, invisible to the senses and knowable only to the mind (52a). In this sense, the Demiurge is not (in) being; he is outside being because he cannot be known. Particular things of the world are made according to ideas, they are imitations of ideas, which, on the one hand means that they are subordinate to ideas, but, on the other hand, this dependence "secures for them some dignity and value."[17]

The third element of the universe before creation of the world was space filled with "prime matter," a chaotically moving mass called becoming. The fact that space and becoming are listed separately indicates that space should be understood in a Newtonian spirit, independent of mass, rather than in an Einsteinian manner as space being an attribute of the mass in a spatio-material union. Space is independent of what is in it, not an aspect or attribute of what it contains.[18] Space is not to be understood as the empty container of the atomists since Plato rejects the existence of the void. Space is never empty, but, still, it is independent of its content. This space seems to be identical with "a receptacle of all becoming, its wetnurse" (49a), as suggested by Aristotle (*Phys.* 209b12).[19] However, Aristotle does not appear to be correct in equating matter with space. Aristotle almost certainly used as a guideline

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[16] This is a hypothetical suggestion of Diès and although Diès does not accept it, he seems to agree with it, after all, when he states that Plato presents God one time as object, as something intelligible, another time as subject – that is, mind, cause – that is, he identifies the model of the world with the Maker-Demiurge, Diès, *Autour de Platon*, pp. 549–550, 555.

[17] Friedrich Solmsen, *Plato's theology* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1942), p. 102.

[18] Thus, it does not appear to be correct to state that we cannot speak about distinguishing space and matter, as maintained by Dietrich J. Schulz, *Das Problem der Materie in Platons Timaios* (Bonn: Bouvier, 1966), p. 55 and seconded by Wolfgang Scheffel, *Aspekte der platonischen Kosmologie. Untersuchungen zum Dialog 'Timaios'* (Leiden: Brill, 1976), pp. 61, 77, 79.

[19] Giovanni Reale considers space to be an aspect of the receptacle, although in another place he says that "the receptacle is identical with spatiality" *Toward a New Interpretation of Plato*

Plato's definition of receptacle as "the thing … totally devoid of all characteristics" (*Tim.* 50e), which coincides with his own definition of matter (for example, *Met.* 1029a), but this receptacle is that in which becoming takes place, not out of which the becoming is.[20]

The Demiurge exercises his power on prime matter out of which the universe is formed, but exercising this power does not go unchallenged. The problem is that the prime matter "of fire, and water, and air and earth, such as they were prior to the creation to the heaven" is not absolutely malleable and is in possession of powers of its own. Therefore, next to "the works of mind," we must also consider "the things which take place out of necessity – for the creation of this world is the combined work of necessity and mind. Mind, the ruling power, persuaded necessity to bring the greater part of created things to perfection" (*Tim.* 47e–48a).

"The things which take place out of necessity" are a primal mass that is an unstructured, unorganized entity in which changes take place in an unpredictable manner. It is "the nature that receives all the bodies," the thing that is "totally devoid of all characteristics," an "invisible and formless being" (50b,e, 51a) in which elemental stuffs, that is, fire, water, earth, and air show, at best, "faint traces of themselves" (53b) because, in fact, in this disordered mass there was nothing "deserving to be called … fire, water, and the rest of the elements" (69b).

Necessity is a force which has to be coeternal with the Demiurge. If it were not, it would have been created by the Demiurge. Would the intelligence, the source of order in the universe, bring into being a force which would disrupt the orderliness of this universe? Would the Demiurge, the source of perfection, purposely create a force which would undermine this perfection? Moreover, necessity must be coeternal with the Demiurge because the matter out of which the universe is formed is also coeternal with him. The lack of order in prime matter is not tantamount to the total chaos, but to the presence of necessity. Chaos in the prime matter is not a total privation of order, but an "ordered disorder." If the lack of order were just a privation, then the Demiurge would have to deal only with the passivity of the chaos to bring it to order, and the extent of the created order would be only limited by the power of its intelligence and creative forces. However, Plato mentions some "principles more ultimate than these that are known to the god" (53d), which can be construed as the existence of laws on the level of quarks that constitute the prime matter. In any event, the necessity in chaos is an active force which the Demiurge has to face and fight intelligently by persuasion. Plato's vision is close to a Manichaean outlook with two opposing forces, but for Plato order must prevail, because it is introduced by an intelligent agent, whereas necessity is a random, unpredictable, and unintelligent agent that cannot overcome intelligence, cannot plan and look forward, cannot use its own force in a meaningful fashion because it lacks (privatively) a means of organizing itself in this fashion. If necessity had such means, it would side

(Washington: The Catholic University of America Press, 1997), pp. 381, 385; cf. also Heinz Happ, *Hyle* (Berlin: de Gruynter, 1971), p. 111.

[20] Cf. Lesley Dean-Jones, 'Aristotle's understanding of Plato's receptacle and its significance for Aristotle's theory of familial resemblance', in M.R. Wright (ed.), *Reason and Necessity: essays on Plato's Timaeus* (London: Duckworth, 2000), p. 111 note 9.

with the Demiurge; thus the best way for the Demiurge to fight necessity is to infuse some intelligence into it, whereby he does not have to fight it by brute force, but by persuasion. And persuasion requires understanding, understanding requires some measure of intelligence and thus organization – an order. So persuaded, necessity brings "the greater part of created things to perfection," so persuaded, necessity behaves as an intelligent agent and thereby acquires a measure of mind. However, this is only a small measure of intelligence, thus the presence of disorderliness in the universe never ends. The primary, intelligent causes keep the universe together as "fair and good," but not perfect because the secondary, unintelligent causes are still present and active. The Demiurge thus is not an almighty creator because he must share his grip on the shape of the universe with necessity. However, because necessity – due to its limited intelligence – is even unable to recognize its own power, there is no danger of the world falling apart. The power of the Demiurge comes from his superior mind and his knowledge of how to use it in persuading necessity to do the work he intends.

What is this necessity? The problem arises in the context of considering the origin of motion in prime matter. The *Laws* firmly states that soul is identical with self-generating motion, which may imply that there is a soul needed in the prime matter to account for its motion. However, "soul is identical with the original source of the generation and motion of all past, present, and future things" (896b), which indicates that soul is the source of motion in the created universe, that is, in the universe endowed with time because "'was' and 'will be' are properly said about the becoming that passes in time" and these phrases we "but incorrectly apply to everlasting being" (*Tim.* 38a, 37e). Hence, "past, present, and future things" mentioned in the *Laws* are created things, things in the universe, including the universe itself, and only to such things is the soul necessary as the source of motion.[21] After all, being is always changeless (35a), and the customary nature of the Demiurge is to be at rest (42e). This statement does not seem to imply that soul is needed for motions of or in everlasting being. Hence, the disorderly motions of the prime matter are simply in the nature of this matter and their disorderly character is summarized in the concept of necessity. It seems, however, that it is more natural in the context of Plato's system to assume that necessity is a soul.

An attempt to reconcile the existence of motion in prime matter, as stated in the *Timaeus*, with the principle that the soul is the source of motion by considering the necessity of being a soul, although with little intelligence, may prove to be somewhat difficult because the Demiurge created the world soul to make the world alive and intelligent, so that necessity would be another soul dwelling in the world.[22] However,

[21] Gregory Vlastos seems to have been once of such an opinion when he wrote that the statement pronouncing the soul to be a primary cause of generation and destruction "merely denotes the supremacy of the soul's teleological action *within the created universe*," but he later abandoned this view, 'The disorderly motion in the *Timaeus*', in R.E. Allen (ed.), *Studies in Plato's Metaphysics* (New York: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1965), pp. 397, 396 note 4.

[22] The statement that soul cannot be a source of chaotic motion, as maintained by Hans G. Gadamer, *Idee und Wirklichkeit in Platos Timaios* (Heidelberg: Carl Winter, 1974), p. 10 note 5, is not particularly convincing.

this identification is not impossible because people have an immortal soul in the head and a mortal one in the chest (69cd), that is, the world can be in possession of two souls as well. In this way, the disorderliness which needs to be held on a leash by the world soul and its persuasive powers could be explained by necessity at work and not by "the irrational parts of the world's soul."[23] Being a soul, necessity would be more amenable to persuasion than a purely naturalistic force.[24] Moreover, as Plato explicitly asserted in the *Laws*, the soul that "keeps control everywhere" is really two souls: "that which does good, and that which has the opposite capacity" (896e), so that the former can be identified with the world soul, the latter with necessity.[25]

A moral argument can also be used in support of the thesis that necessity is a soul. According to Plato, both good and evil are eternal (*Theaet.* 176a); there is an eternal struggle between good and evil, and man has to side with one of them, which depends on him alone, on his "desires and state of soul" (*Laws* 904c). God as an essentially good being is the source of all that is good, not evil (*Rep.* 379b) because "it is impossible that the gods are maker of evil" (391e); and because soul is the cause of good and evil (*Phaedrus* 245c–e), so there must be an evil soul and a good soul (*Laws* 896e). Consequently, the evil in the world originates in necessity (bad soul), not in the world soul which is good, and thus is the result of the lack of knowledge and insufficiency of intelligence. Hence, it is not surprising that Plato gives such a prominent role to education in the *Republic* and *Laws*.

If there is motion in prime matter, motion caused by necessity, in what respect motion caused by the Demiurge is superior to the former motion? The difference lies in intentionality. The causes that count are always a work of an intelligent design; they are divine causes (68e), teleological causes, because they are "on account of the future" (76d) – causes "which are endowed with mind and are workers of things fair and good"; but there are also "second or auxiliary causes" which "are deprived of intelligence (*phronesis*) and always produce chance effects without order" (46e). These unintelligent causes were the only ones operating before the Demiurge began his work of creation.

Secondary causes are not completely random; they are the causes "of those things, which, being moved by others, are compelled to move others" (46e), and as such, they are necessary causes. The problem with them is that they are meaningless – they do not lead anywhere; there is no visible purpose in them. They are a manifestation of an energy that is wasted because it causes only an aimless motion. This is a motion for motion's sake, unable to accomplish anything and having no intention to do so. The reason is that such an intentional element is missing to begin with. Secondary causes are mechanical in nature, allowing, for example, air to turn into earth through condensation, but then earth will be dissolved back into air, showing no apparent

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[23] As offered by Glen R. Morrow, 'Necessity and persuasion in Plato's *Timaeus*', in Allen (ed.), *Studies in Plato's Metaphysics*, p. 437.

[24] Thomas Henri Martin says that creating world soul amounts to infusing intelligence into an eternal soul of chaos, necessity itself being a "disordered soul," *Études sur le Timée de Platon* (Paris: Ladrange, 1841; reprinted New York: Arno Press, 1976), vol. 2, pp. 183, 190.

[25] Solmsen sees a progression from an inanimate blind necessity of the *Timaeus* to a living bad soul to be exercised under the influence of the Persian religion, *Plato's Theology*, p. 142.

purpose for these transformations. The world has to be saturated with intentionality to be meaningful; changes in it have to be preconceived to have a purpose; a causal chain has to be spurred with a plan in mind to have any orderliness in the world. Thus, an order is a work of intelligence which uses natural causes to accomplish its goals. There is no order even in the most regular behavior of a self-driven mechanism if this mechanism is not first designed by a mind. In this sense, a work of the weakest mind is more orderly than the most regular chain of mechanistic causes. There is more order in even a wretchedly shaped sculpture made by a thinking being devoid of talent than in a perfectly regular crystal shaped through natural forces.

However, could such a crystal arise as the result of secondary causes only? Not in prime matter. These movements are termed chance movements, and they cannot by themselves lead to an emergence of a structure composed of the four elements. Secondary causes result in movements that resemble Brownian movements of small particles suspended in a fluid; they result in an increase (or, at best, non-decrease) of entropy of the prime matter, that is, in a uniform distribution in space of "faint traces" of air, fire, water, and earth.

Creating the world consisted primarily of introducing an order in prime matter through primary causation of the Demiurge. However, orderliness of causes means not only adding a goal to existing causal chains but also organizing otherwise independently working secondary causes for higher purposes and making causal chains working aimlessly in parallel to serve an organizing goal which would be unattainable by one such chain only. Therefore, although the mechanism of sight is complex and can be explained in terms of secondary causes (45b–46c), these are teleological causes that imbue sight with meaning and thus with order. The Demiurge "gave us sight to the end that we might behold the revolutions of mind in heaven, and apply them to the revolutions of our own intelligence (διανόησις)" (47b), whereby sight is situated in a larger context of the human body and the human life. The same can be said about hearing and other senses which are interdependent and work in unison for the higher purpose of human life.

To maintain an order in the world, a constant intervention of the Demiurge is needed. However, the Demiurge does not have to do it personally. He only starts off the workings of the universe and maintains its orderly existence through his subsidiaries. According to Plato, stars are gods and these gods made other gods in the manner described in Greek mythology. To them the Demiurge submitted the rest of work, in particular, "fashioning the generations of those that were mortal," and withdrew from the affairs of the world into his eternal rest (40e, 41a,d, 42e, 69c).[26] Intelligence, intentionality, purposefulness are now present in the world through gods and men and this gives the world an order.

Is the Demiurge an infinite being? His existence is infinite because the Demiurge always existed, if only in a timeless fashion (time was created with the world). Also, his knowledge must be infinite because the number of ideas is infinite. Is there really an infinity of ideas? How many ideas are there and how specific are they? There is

[26] This deistic solution is a good substantiation of the statement that in the *Timaeus* the Demiurge "stands for nothing more than the transition of a state of unordered motion to the state of order," Gadamer, *Idee und Wirklichkeit in Platos Timaios*, p. 11.

certainly an idea of triangle, but is there a separate idea of a scalene triangle, a right-angle triangle, a triangle with angles of 1, 1, and 178 degrees, a triangle with angles of 1, 2, and 177 degrees, and so on? In this way, there would be an infinity of ideas, and in the finite universe most of them would have no instantiation. Therefore, the statement that universals, or ideas, without instances "would constitute a cosmic anomaly" [27] presumes that there must be a finite number of ideas and these are the only ones that are instantiated. However, there may be ideas that currently have no instantiation, but they had it before (the idea of a dinosaur) or will have one in the future (a dwelling on the Moon). Because the world is presumably without end with respect to duration, each of the ideas may have a chance to be instantiated, at least once. There may be ideas that stand no chance of instantiation, at least in the material world, for example, mythological creatures. Is a thought about a Pegasus or a griffin such an instantiation? If so, then no cosmic anomaly would arise.

This leads us directly to infinity of the Demiurge. It takes an infinite mind to comprehend all ideas, which is needed to create a perfect world; that is, the Demiurge's comprehension ability must be infinite. Even creating the best finite world requires an infinite knowledge because the order is definable only in numerical terms as proportion and harmony. [28] The orderliness of the universe, then, presupposes infinity and because the tools instrumental in bringing an order into being are infinite, the infinite cognitive power of the Demiurge is indispensable even in creating a finite universe. This is very much like the creation of the world according to Leibniz: the Demiurge considers an infinity of possible worlds and chooses the best, which requires that the Demiurge's understanding be infinite.[29]

Monotheism?

Plato frequently speaks about gods and for him nearly literally "everything is full of gods" as Thales already had stated (*Laws* 899b). Stars are gods and so is our world, "perceptible god, image of the intelligible" (εἰκὼν τοῦ νοητοῦ, *Tim.* 92c).[30] Our world is a god since it was created by the Demiurge, since its order is of divine origin. Therefore, divine attributes of this world are reflections of attributes of the Demiurge. Looking for the source of these attributes outside God is for Plato unjustified and impious. And so, frequent references to the gods do not have to contradict monotheism since these gods play about the same role in Plato as angels

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[27] Robert L. Patterson, *Plato on Immortality* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1965), p. 124.

[28] "Every craft and science must have share in" number and calculation (*Rep.* 522c). "No knowledge without number," as phrased by David A. Kolb, 'Pythagoras bound: limit and unlimited in Plato's *Philebus*', *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 21 (1983), p. 505.

[29] See also Adam Drozdek, 'Infinity in Plato', *Eos* 87 (2000), pp. 53–62.

[30] Bovet, believing that ideas are in the Demiurge's mind, reads here εἰκὼν τοῦ νοητοῦ, "image of the maker," which would not make a distinction between the model of the world and its maker, Pierre Bovet, *Le Dieu de Platon d'après l'ordre chronologique des dialogues* (Geneva: Kündig, 1902), p. 161; see also Audrey N.M. Rich, 'The Platonic ideas as the thoughts of God', *Mnemosyne* 7 (1954), p. 124 note 4.

in Christian theology.[31] It must be remembered that the gods are created, which is clearly stated in the *Timaeus*.

The only problem may be with necessity, that is, the force causing motion in the prime matter. If necessity is considered soul and the soul endowed with a small measure of rationality, then Plato's monotheism seems to be compromised. Rather it would be a version of Manichaeism that gives superiority to God-Demiurge as the source of goodness and perfect rationality. Evil, by nature, cannot defeat good since evil consists of lack of knowledge about itself. Necessity is incapable of prevailing over God, as it is in the case in Manichaeism, but it is not a force that can be ignored by God. Creation of the world consists of submitting, through persuasion, necessity, and the world can only exist when the good rules in it, whether through the gods or enlightened politicians. It is thus slanted Manichaeism which accorded a clear superiority to God, and not absolute monotheism of Judaism or Christianity. Plato's God is not omnipotent, *creatio ex nihilo* does not come into play;[32] had it been possible, would God not have used a method of creation that circumvents necessity and create nature that does not belong to its domain and then create the world from this matter? Although not omnipotent, Plato's God is a person, God caring about his creation, God of goodness who does what he does because of this goodness.[33] God of love will appear in Christianity, God loving people to the extent that through his incarnation and death he purges the world of evil. It is also omnipotent God who has absolute control over creation, the creation that was brought into being through divine *fiat* and not through molding of coeval prime matter. Philosophically and theologically, however, Plato prepared the ground for Christianity, and it is not surprising that Christian theologians, beginning with the Church Fathers, valued Plato very highly although none of them identified Plato's God with the Christian God.

Callipolis and Magnesia

Plato's philosophical and theological views determine his outlook on what should be the organization of social and political life and what should be the basis of knowledge of prospective political rulers.

In the early dialogs, social problems were treated on the level of individual people; then, in the *Republic*, Plato outlines the system of the state of Callipolis; in the *Politicus*, he analyzes attributes of individual politicians; and in the *Laws*, he gives a meticulous description of the laws of the future state of Magnesia. There are differences between the systems of Callipolis and Magnesia: the communism of Callipolis – in the sense of common ownership of property, women,

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[31] "It is the nature of an historical accident that Jews and Christians have called their subordinate divine beings angels, whereas Greeks called them gods," Patterson, *Plato on immortality*, p. 137 note 3. The gods are also considered manifestations of the divine, the latter being the highest principle of reality, which is the orderliness, W.J. Verdenius, 'Platons Gottesbegriff', pp. 245, 247, 253.

[32] Although the possibility of *creatio ex nihilo* was "quite intelligible to Plato," as supposed by A.E. Taylor, *Plato: the man and his work* (London: Methuen, 1978 [1926]), p. 391 note 1.

[33] Plato's theodicy is founded on the idea of the good, says Diès, *Autour de Platon*, p. 583.

and children – is replaced with a more realistic system in Magnesia where private property is to some extent reinstated (citizens are managers rather than owners) and the family becomes a basic element of society. More important, however, are the similarities between the two states. In both of them, there is hierarchical social structure in which the rulers are truly the best politicians. Their prerogatives result from the fact that they know the truth and have access to the immutable knowledge of what is and should be a natural and social world. They know ideal models which they implement through their political, legislative, and administrative activity. Such knowledge, the knowledge of the ideas, is insufficient without theology. Therefore, the guardian of Callipolis becomes a politician of Magnesia only when he makes theology the foundation of his knowledge to create laws not only by imitating truth, that is, by having insight into the world of ideas, but also by reference to God himself, either directly, through the mystical experience, or indirectly, through an oracle, in particular the one in Delphi.

Piety presented in the *Laws* does not consist in fulfilling the duties of religious character but in inner disposition regarding religion and, consequently, toward moral obligations and the rules of social life. Such disposition is formed through presentation of the gods as perfect and just beings. This is a vision sharply different from the image of the gods presented by Greek mythology which is hardly conducive to arousing sincere piety.

According to Plato, poets are guilty of the popularity of the image of the gods with which some people try to justify theft because the gods are not beneath it. Such a view, however, is unacceptable since "this is not likely and not true; but who does so unlawfully is not a god nor a child of gods. The lawgiver, as befits him, knows this better than all of the poets" (941b). By recommending the cult of traditional gods, making offerings to them and building temples, Plato is not just an opportunist afraid of being branded an iconoclast and afraid of Socrates' lot, but he seems to be sincere in his views.[34] Traditional views are not mistaken in accepting the existence of the gods, but in ascribing to them attributes and acts that are not befitting the Olympians. Thus, the only acceptable kind of poetry is "hymns to the gods and the praises of good men" (*Rep.* 607a; *Laws* 801e).[35] Plato did not condemn poetry as such since he appreciated its aesthetic value, but in its evaluation he focused on the ethical aspect. And, after all, keeping ethical criteria almost automatically implied the presence of aesthetic criteria: aren't the gods an embodiment of goodness and beauty?

A large number of the laws of Magnesia were taken by Plato from Attic law. However, Plato was an innovator in philosophy of law because he was an innovator in philosophy of religion. Religion was not, for him, a matter of abiding by the dogmas and of fulfilling the cultic duties imposed by tradition. Religion was, first of all, a matter of belief, a matter of the soul and personal conviction. Although knowledge of the true nature of religious matters was accessible to everyone, it was indispensable that the political leaders, who are at the same time religious leaders, possessed it. Therefore, all cultic prescriptions, when seen from the spiritual perspective, acquire

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[34] Cf. Reverdin, *La Religion de la cité platonicienne*, p. 54.

[35] In this, Plato follows Pythagoras who taught his disciples "to sing songs accompanied by the lyre and to display a reasonable gratitude to the gods and eminent men by hymns" (DL 8.24).

new meaning; they are found by citizens as valid and are followed not because of a danger of punishment but because of the voice of conscience. In this sense, "religion of the Platonic state represents the highest effort of traditional religion to reach intellectual and moral perfection."[36]

The law is supposed to convince. But it also includes elements of compulsion, in particular, in religious matters since for Plato religion "has a sacred value, the value not only of a means, but of a goal."[37] Proper functioning of the state is not the ultimate goal of law since the goal of the functioning of the state is getting citizens closer to God and making religion part of their lives. The state should be a reflection of the order that has its source in God; therefore, laws are clear expression of this order, a clear statement of how the state and its institutions should function. If the law speaks about religion and uses religious arguments, this is an expression of the proper goal of the law, which is to introduce divine order in politics, education, the military, and so on. Even if religion is used as a means, this is done because it was beforehand accepted as a goal. Plato's state mimics the divine order and the laws are the rules of this order. The laws cannot be separated from religion since they are its expression, its concrete manifestation in social matters; law is an imitation on human scale of the order that exists on divine scale.[38] Religious arguments for validity of the law are not only of utilitarian character – religion as an effective means of maintaining a particular social order, but they are also the result of the conviction that religion is a true foundation of state and law.[39] Plato's vision presented in the *Republic* and, in particular, in the *Laws* is the most forceful description of the religious character of legislation and politics,[40] which allows for the use of religion as an effective tool in regulating social life. The utilitarian character in the long run would not be sufficient. A religious argument is really convincing as a decisive argument in legal matters when the law is based on religion.

Because God, not man, is the measure of all things, true piety lies in imitating God so that human character is a reflection of the divine character and divine justice (*Laws* 716a,cd) since the gods do not abandon the one "who is willing and eager to be just and by exercising virtue to become like God as much as it is possible for man" (*Rep.* 613ab). Man should strive for his soul being translated after death to "a better place" (*Laws* 904d), which is only possible by becoming like God and "a soul becomes like God when it becomes just and pure with understanding"

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[36] Reverdin, *La religion de la cité platonicienne*, p. 250.

[37] Diès, *Autour de Platon*, p. 592.

[38] "Imitation of God is the essence of his (Plato's) religion" just as "the idea of imitation is in the center of Platonic philosophy," Diès, *Autour de Platon*, p. 594.

[39] It is thus at least incomplete to summarize Plato's work as "the first comprehensive social theory of religion in European thought," as proposed by George N. Belknap, 'Religion in Plato's states', in C.M. Smertenko and G.N. Belknap (eds), *Studies in Greek Religion* (Eugene: University of Oregon, 1935), p. 43.

[40] Solmsen says that "taken as a whole, *Laws* 10 represents a most powerful and comprehensive defense of the spiritual world *in toto*, and this spiritual world includes the political sphere and all moral and political values," *Plato's Theology*, p. 169.

(*Theaet.* 176b).[41] This imitation of God is not automatic, it is not simple and thus the role of the state lies in facilitating its citizens reaching this goal. Politics is thus in the service of religion, not vice versa as it most often was before and after Plato, as expressed by the Sophists and as became a political program with Machiavelli. Plato is a revolutionary in seeing religion as a foundation of the state and morality and thus of social life (*Laws* 888b).[42]

[41] This principle of the *Theaetetus* Diès calls "essential since it expresses all that is best and, it can be said, most reasonable and most human in the effort of the religious soul," *Autour de Platon*, p. 597.

[42] "Whereas the old Greek understanding [of this problem] almost entirely reduced moral obligations to political ones, Plato, in the contrary, reduced political obligations to moral ones," Heinrich Tietzel, 'Die Idee des Guten in Platos Staat und der Gottesbegriff', *Programm des Königlichen Gymnasiums zu Wetzlar* (Wetzlar: Schnitzler, 1894), p. 13. "The social architecture which Plato describes as the ideal state is entirely devoted to the education and guidance of man and insofar resembles more the Church than the traditional Greek city state," Werner Jaeger, *Humanism and Theology* (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1943), p. 56.

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Chapter 14

Aristotle and the Unmoved Mover

In agreement with a common Greek conviction, Aristotle states that the goal of theoretical knowledge is truth, but he adds that such knowledge consists in knowing causes (*Met*. 993b20–25) because "we possess knowledge of a thing only when we know its cause" (*An*. *post.* 71b30–31). However, could such knowledge be attained if all causal chains were infinite? Not by finite beings as we are. For us, by principle, the infinite is unknowable (*Phys.* 187b7–8); therefore, it is critical to Aristotle to assure that knowledge is possible by pointing to the fact that causal chains are not infinite, at least, not some of them. A proof he presents in the *Physics* and in the *Metaphysics* leads to the conclusion that there must exist an eternal unmoved mover (UM) that is a final cause for the first heaven (FH) that transforms, as it were, final causality of the UM into efficient causality to be used in moving other celestial spheres and things in the sublunary world. He then establishes a finite sequence of causes in which the UM constitutes the beginning of the sequence, whereby full knowledge of the world becomes possible. Does this solve completely the problem of infinite causal sequences?

Infinity and the Unmoved Mover

The hierarchy of causes is finite, but on a particular level the chain of causes is infinite. This infinity is limited in that the efficient causes by themselves would not be efficient. They are pushing causes, but a pulling component is also needed, and the UM becomes, in Aristotle's system, such a pulling cause.[1] Infinity is thus constrained by finite hierarchy, whereby infinity is subdued to a finitistic solution and thus finitistically constrained.[2]

This, however, does not rule out the existence of infinite causal chains. In Aristotle's system, the world is eternal, nothing in the world was created, events in the world are interlocked, and sequences of these events are extended infinitely in time. This must be so because "it is impossible that anything should be produced if there were nothing existing before" (*Met*. 1032b30–31). Also, like produces like, so animals can

[1] The UM "acts only as a *terminus ad quem* not as *terminus a quo*," Konrad Elser, *Die Lehre des Aristoteles über das Wirken Gottes* (Münster: Aschendorffsche Buchhandlung, 1893), p. 93.

[2] In Aristotle, a finitistic solution always takes precedence over an infinitistic explication, even at the cost of becoming more complicated than the latter; see Adam Drozdek, 'Aristotle's razor', *Diálogos* 70 (1997), pp. 181–198. Containing infinity in a finitistic framework is also found in seeing the knowledge of attributes as a way of acquiring knowledge about an infinity of individuals (*Met.* 999a26–29) or in the solution of Zeno's paradoxes by dissolving the infinity of points in their potential existence in an actually existing line continuum.

be produced by animals of the same kind and "this is the only reasonable postulate to make" (*De gen. anim*. 715b10–11, *Met*. 1034b10–19). This means that there is an infinite sequence of animals in which two neighbor links are in the parent–offspring relation to each other: an animal has a parent but this parent, to exist, must have its own parent of the same kind, but the latter parent must have had its own parent and so forth, to infinity.[3] Such an infinite regress is hardly admissible to Aristotle. One way of solving the problem is to give finitist ramifications to this infinitistic component of his doctrine. The solution is given by the concept of the UM whose final causality empowers the infinite sequence of efficient causes in the process of, for instance, animals producing other animals of the same kind. The final cause is a spur which enables the efficient causes to be brought into action. It is an eternally existing cause hovering over efficient causes present in the world and making them actual by inciting in a particular being the desire to be like this UM. The UM does not cause that a particular animal becomes a particular animal, but it enables the process of animals engendering other animals.[4] In this sense Aquinas is right when he says that "the final cause is the cause of the other causes" (*In Phys*. 2.5.11).

Final causation allows Aristotle to escape the inevitability of infinite causal chains. In a sense it is true, as once observed by Lévêque, that there is a contradiction between the principle that form and matter in beings are caused by similar beings (plant produces plant, man begets man) and the principle that science should not go to infinity when looking for causes.[5] Infinity of causal chains is the result of the infinity of the world, but if science wanted to rely solely on efficient causes, then the indicated contradiction would be unavoidable. However, final causation allows us to see these infinite chains through finite glasses, capture them in finite framework, and understand them finistically. This also might have been one reason why Aristotle introduces different kinds of causes.

What is the nature of final causality exercised by the UM? To answer this question we should consider first the problem of the nature of the UM itself.

Transcendence of the Unmoved Mover

The UM is the mind; thinking is its essence, its only and perpetual activity. What is it thinking about? The UM, a divine thought, thinks about itself (αὐτὸν νοεῖ) and thus its thinking is a thinking about thinking (ἡ νόησις νοήσεως νόησις, *Met.* 1074b34–35).[6]

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[3] Sarah Waterlow, *Nature, Change, and Agency in Aristotle's Physics* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982), pp. 152–158; James G. Lennox, 'Are Aristotelian species eternal?', in Allan Gotthelf (ed.), *Aristotle on Nature and Living Things* (Pittsburgh: Mathesis, 1985), p. 75.

[4] "What kind of tree the acorn grows into is determined not by the prime mover but by its own nature, i.e., by what kind of tree produced it. The causality of the prime mover accounts only for the fact that it grows at all," Charles H. Kahn, 'The place of the prime mover in Aristotle's teleology', in Gotthelf (ed.), *Aristotle on Nature and Living Things*, p. 186.

[5] Charles Lévêque, *Le premier Moteur et la nature dans le système d'Aristote* (Paris: Didot, 1852), p. 116.

[6] In this, νοήσεως is taken as objective genitive, so that νοήσεως νόησις becomes a rephrasing of αὐτὸν νοεῖ; if νοήσεως is taken to be a subjective genitive, then the

Thinking about thinking? About whose thinking? Evidently, about its own, about the UM's thinking which is thinking about thinking so that thinking about thinking amounts to thinking about thinking about thinking. About whose thinking? About the UM's, so that the process becomes tantamount to thinking about thinking about thinking about thinking, and so on. It is a recursion without the base case, or an infinite sequence without the first and last elements, which is inadmissible to Aristotle. However, this can be considered an expression of the UM's infinity: the chain of finding an ultimate thinking object of thought is delayed infinitely and this delay exists actually. This is an interpretation of thinking about thinking in the spirit of Russell's theory of types in which there is a hierarchy of metalanguages and metatheories: one language allows statements about another language, but never about itself. In Aristotle, this hierarchy would not have any beginning or end.

Aristotle may find such an interpretation unfeasible because, as he says, in the case of immaterial beings, thinking and the object of thinking are identical (*De anima* 430a3–4, *Met*. 1075a3–5). Therefore, thinking about thinking should be understood as self-reflection, self-awareness, a manifestation of consciousness. This would convert the infinite sequence of thinkings (thinking$_i$ about thinking$_{i+1}$ about thinking$_{i+2}$ …) into a vacuous, not to say vicious, circle (thinking about thinking about thinking …, because for each *i*, thinking$_i$ = thinking$_{i+1}$). To prevent this self-reference from becoming vacuous, the UM's thinking about itself should mean thinking about attributes of its own thinking. The UM thus thinks, "I exist, I am perfect, I am eternal, I am a spiritual substance, I am happy," and this not in succession, as in discursive thinking which is connected with potentiality and thus with motion, but all at the same time, in one act of meditation or contemplation.

Thinking about anything except itself would undermine the UM's perfection and thus is inadmissible to Aristotle because only the UM does not change and thinking about anything that changes is expressly excluded from UM's thinking (*Met*. 1074b25–26).[7] The UM is contemplating, contemplating itself, because if it thought about anything else, it would be changeable, because everything beyond the UM is changeable and by thinking about the changeable it would become itself a subject of change. Therefore, Aquinas' argument that the UM thinks about everything because it thinks about itself and everything depends on it (*In Met.* 12.11.2615–2620) is too generous. Being outside the universe, the UM does not even know the universe exists and is separated from it by its own perfection. Consequently, from the perspective of the UM, its final causality is a side effect of its existence which benefits the world that the UM knows nothing about. It does not know the world, and hence it does not know the final causality it inadvertently exercises.

This ontological and epistemological separation of the UM from the world means that the mental language of the UM has to be extremely limited in terms of nouns, verbs, and adjectives the UM can utilize. The language cannot include any words whose meanings are objects from the universe. Also, the logic the UM utilizes has

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resulting phrase – "thinking of thinking" or "thinking activity of the thinking subject" – would be pleonastic.

[7] See also arguments in Elser, *Die Lehre des Aristoteles über das Wirken Gottes*, pp. 46–61.

to be curtailed. In particular, the logical operator "not" must be ruled out from being used either explicitly, as in "I am not perishable" – that is, "not (I am perishable)," or implicitly, as in "I am imperishable," because such an operator clearly points to something outside the UM. In this way, the law of noncontradiction cannot be phrased by the UM.[8] With the great emphasis placed by Aristotle on thinking as a distinctive mark of humans, the thinking of the eternal UM seems to fare much worse than the thinking of mortals. Moreover, does the UM realize the full meaning of words present in its mind? It seems that the word "eternity" is much more meaningful if it is contrasted with the concept of finite duration. Also, the UM may appreciate its eternal bliss much more if it knows that there are beings devoid of such a state and that thanks to the UM these beings try to approach this state as much as their natural abilities permit them.

There is one more point worth mentioning. The UM thinks about its thinking. But what is thinking? "Nothing, unless it is potentiality, the faculty of thinking." But can such potentiality exist separate from substance? By separating thinking from substance, Aristotle "annihilated his God." To him, activity is better than the faculty that is active, whereby the most perfect being, the UM, becomes actuality of potentiality without the potentiality itself, an effect without a cause.[9]

Desire

How does a final cause exercise its force? A final cause is defined as "that for the sake of which," as the end of a process, as the good on account of which a change takes place (*Phys.* 195a23–26; also 2.8). This cause, however, can act only if there is a tendency, drive, or desire in a being that wants to attain this end. And there is no shortage of desire in Aristotle's universe. Aristotle says that even inanimate objects desire something. By its own nature, matter itself strives and desires (ἐφίεσθαι καὶ ὀρέγεσθαι, 192a18) what is divine and good. Also, plants and animals desire (ὀρέγεται) to have a maximum possible share in the eternal and divine (*De anima* 415a26–b2). Generally, "in all things nature desires (ὀρέγεσθαί) what is better" (*De gen. et corr.* 336b27–28). Each being has in itself a drive or tendency (ὁρμή), a principle of motion, an innate impulse of change (*Phys.* 192b13–15,18), "an essentially innate principle,"[10] which causes movement of the beings toward the desired (*De anima* 3.10, *An. pr.* 70b9–12).

If desiring is understood in a psychological sense as a faculty of the soul, then the whole of reality seems to be ensouled which leads to panpsychism.[11] This may lead to a view not only that the FH desires the UM, but also that other beings can

[8] It is noteworthy that it is possible to create consistent (noncontradictory) systems in negation-free languages: a system is consistent if it does not include all formulas that can be formed in the language of the system. But the law of noncontradiction cannot be meaningfully reconstructed in such a language.

[9] Lévêque, *Le premierMoteur et la nature dans le système d'Aristote*, pp. 133, 140, 142.

[10] Ibid., p. 83.

[11] John M. Rist, 'Some aspects of Aristotelian teleology', *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association* 96 (1965), pp. 337–349.

be moved directly by the UM as a final cause. In this way, the causal impact of the UM on the world is direct and universal and not accomplished indirectly through the mediation of the FH.

An opposite view takes all references to desire in the case of all beings, except humans and animals, as metaphoric. Then how can we interpret the most important desire of all, the FH's desire for the UM, the desire upon which the motion of the entire universe is contingent?

First, we have to realize that the FH, like all heavenly bodies, is alive,[12] which also follows from the fact that these bodies are considered divine.[13] Alive, they have to possess a principle of life, which is soul (*De anima* 415b7–12), and this soul should enable them to desire the UM. However, Aristotle is silent about such souls. What type of souls can they be? They may be similar to vegetative souls, like in plants, which accounts for nourishing the plants and their reproduction. But do the aetherial bodies need this type of soul? They do not nourish themselves, neither do they multiply. Then are heavenly bodies endowed with a sensitive soul, like animals? Such a soul exercises the power of perception, desire, and motion; therefore, sensitive souls may appear to be more adequate in the case of heavenly bodies than vegetative souls, because they desire the final cause. But do they perceive? Possibly, but this is hard to say. Why would heavenly bodies need perception, particularly the FH? The FH cannot see the UM and seeing anything else would be redundant to its nature of eternal circular motion, and nature does nothing in vain, as repeatedly stated by Aristotle.

It seems that only one possibility is left; namely, heavenly bodies have thinking souls. Such a soul, however, unites in itself the powers of the other souls, but, as already mentioned, these powers are not fitting for heavenly bodies. The problem can be solved in two ways. It may be claimed that these bodies possess only the νοῦς, only a mind, not a soul, because desiring does require the existence of a soul.[14] This is at variance with the view that living entities must have a soul. But because of the special kind of matter that constitutes the supralunary bodies, it may be claimed that they can be alive, having just the *nous*, not a soul. If, however, we take expressions like οὐρανὸς ἔμψυχος (*De caelo* 285a29) to literally mean an ensouled heaven rather that just a living heaven, then we may envision heavenly bodies to have souls that are endowed only with the *nous* to the exclusion of all the powers that are needed to live in the sublunary world. In any event, the FH is a rational entity, a being that can reason. This intellectual ability of the FH is supported by the fact that in the context of discussing the dependency of the FH on the UM, Aristotle points to objects of desire and objects of thought as the ones capable of moving without themselves being moved. He also "boldly identifies"[15] the object of desire with the object of thought and says that appetite by itself can be a misleading guide towards the good, and "the real good is the primary object of rational wish." Desire, in this case, is a consequence of thinking, of deliberation (*Met.* 1072a29–30; cf. *De motu*

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[12] *De caelo* 275b26, 279a28–30, 285a29, 286a9–11, 292a18–21, b1–2, b28–30.

[13] *Phys*. 196a33–34, *De caelo* 286a8–12, *De anima* 405a32–b1, *Met*. 1026a16–17.

[14] Paweł Siwek, 'Comment le premieur moteur meut l'universe', *Divinitas* 11 (1967), p. 391; Leo Elders, *Aristotle's Theology* (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1972), p. 42.

[15] Lloyd P. Gerson, *God and Greek Philosophy* (London: Routledge, 1990), p. 124.

an. 701a34–36). Would this have any bearing on the problem at hand if the FH were not considered a thinking being?

In the same context, Aristotle says that the UM moves like one being loved (κινεῖ ὡς ἐρώμενον, 1072b3). If this is taken to be more than an insignificant simile, then we may ask whether it is meaningful to consider vegetative or sensitive souls to be capable of love. If not, then love should be associated with the *nous*, with an intellectual ability. That is, an object of love must be not only desirable but also intelligible. So, the FH is an intelligible being because it loves the UM, whereby the latter becomes the final cause for the former. Intelligence does not produce motion, but it submits to the soul a good object worthy of desire and love that induces appetite which, in turn, causes motion (*De anima* 433a21–b4).

What would happen if there were no UM? The world would stop in its tracks because the FH would stop its rotation. This rotation must be eternally maintained by the presence of the UM that is the final cause of the FH motion. The UM is FH's motivation for motion and consequently for passing motion to the rest of the universe. The UM is FH's goal and reason for its activity. With no UM, the motivation disappears; the FH has no reason for its motion and it stops, and with it the world's motion is brought to a halt. With no UM, there is a silent, motionless world; with no UM, there is stillness in the universe. The world would be in a dormant state, pregnant with potentiality but having no spur to actualize it.

But why should the FH desire the UM? What is so desirable in the UM that is a powerful enough reason for the FH to be active, to be in motion, to strive for it? To be like the UM. In what sense? To reach the state of contemplation? If so, why should the FH not do just that, namely contemplate? The FH, being a union of *nous* and aether and as such capable only of actualizing its potentiality, cannot reach the state of contemplation which involves no change. However, maybe the second-best state for the FH would be to think discursively, to reason, to limit its activity to the intellectual sphere, to devote itself entirely to (self-)cognition. Why then exercise any action on the rest of the world by being an efficient cause? What good does it do the FH? It only distracts it from what is truly desirable, namely from becoming more like the UM which is its *telos*. If the UM is entirely uninterested in the affairs of this world, the FH seemingly would do best by detaching itself from the rest of the world and devoting itself to the intellectual activity whose object is the perfect being, the UM.[16]

In this light, it is not entirely clear how the FH exercises its function, how – and why – it maintains the machinery of the world in working order. It gazes at the UM that is its final cause, but why does it translate its desire for the UM into an efficient cause? Why does the FH care for the world by moving it instead of abandoning it to be more like the UM which is concerned solely about its own contemplation?

[16] By the ability of the FH to think about the UM, that is, thinking about thinking, the UM is not rendered redundant because the FH becomes itself thinking about thinking, as claimed by Walter Bröcker, *Aristoteles* (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1974), p. 224. The FH cannot become thinking about thinking because it is made from aether. Also, the UM would be redundant if the FH, itself an imperfect being, could on its own imagine such a perfect being as the UM, and then by thinking about this imagined UM become itself thinking thought. How could FH know that this fruit of its imagination is the perfection if there were nothing objectively corresponding to it?

It seems that the natural movement inherent in the FH, the aetherial substance, is stronger than the mental side of the FH. Being like the UM means being eternal and because the nature of the FH is defined more by its substance and natural movement than by its intellect, the FH apparently becomes more divine by eternally executing a circular motion than by trying to imitate the UM's contemplation.[17] Contemplation as a means of becoming divine is reserved only for immaterial beings.

How about humans? Unlike the FH that is eternal by the nature of its substance, humans are not, their earthly pilgrimage is limited and after the intellect is detached, they can acquire divine status; therefore, humans' concern about their intellect is well founded and prospectively promising.

But this brings us back to the FH. Is it really eternal? How do we know it? Observation teaches us that the heavens move in a circle. However, this is seeing more than the mere observation suggests. After all, the same observation indicates that there are noncircular motions of heavenly bodies as well. This leads to the problem of explaining these motions by a combination of circular movements. Observation cannot teach us that a motion is circular – at best that it is very close to a circle – and certainly not that a motion is eternal. But these are two assumptions, unproven and unprovable in Aristotle's physics, that allow Aristotle to say that the heavens are built from another elemental substance fitting its motion, namely the aether (*De caelo* 269a26–28, 270b20–25). However, this statement is based upon metaphysical, not physical assumptions. If these assumptions are rejected, then it may turn out that the FH does not move in a circle and that it is not eternal, and thus not made from aether. If so, its preferences may change so that the FH, as a thinking being, may now want – like a mortal man – to become more contemplative, more philosophical, because that is where the divine element can be found. Furthermore, because the eternal pull of its aetherial nature would not be present any more, the intellectual part could become a leading force in its existence. In this way, the FH would become more and more contemplative and less and less concerned about being the first moving mover of the universe. By striving for perfection, the FH would bring the universe to a halt, which, actually, may be beneficial to inanimate bodies – they would stay eternally in their natural places, and to thinking beings – they would be released from their corporeal confinements; but not for plants and animals because they could not eternally procreate any more (for plants and animals, reproduction is a means of participating in the eternal and the divine, *De anima* 415a26–29).

If the FH is aetherial, and thus in perpetual motion, then it is doomed to this motion and its love for the UM and imitating it can only lead to the maintenance of this motion.[18] However, in this way aether, the material aspect of the FH, weighs heavier than the FH's intellect and suppresses any intellectual ambitions of the FH to become more like the UM. If the FH were not perpetual, and thus not aetherial, the material part would eventually loose its grip on the FM, allowing it to imitate the UM

[17] Such an interpretation seems to have been already proposed by Alexander of Aphrodisias, *Quaest.* 1.25, cf. Robert W. Sharples, 'Aristotelian theology after Aristotle', in D. Frede and A. Laks (eds), *Traditions in Theology* (Leiden: Brill, 2002), p. 6.

[18] Therefore, as aptly phrased by Kahn, "for Aristotle … it is love that makes the world go round," Kahn, 'The place of the prime mover in Aristotle's teleology', p. 183.

to a much greater extent than in the preceding case. Thinking beings that are built from fire, earth, water, and air eventually fare considerably better than the thinking beings built from an apparently – because eternal – better elemental substance than the other four substances.

God

By unequivocally identifying the UM with the deity, Aristotle's discussion of the UM represents Aristotle's position in theological matters.[19] It is certainly not true that when taking the word "God" in the religious sense, Aristotle's philosophy should be identified with atheism.[20] By stressing the fact that the UM is a deity, Aristotle indicates the theological import of the UM. There are certain traits of the UM that traditionally are ascribed to deities. The UM is separated from the world, its existence is independent of the existence of the world, it is an eternal, immutable, and intelligent being. But it also has characteristics which are unacceptable for many theologies. The UM is separated from the world to the extent that it does not know the world exists. Its impact on the world is a side effect of its own existence. Its perfection means it cannot intervene in the world's affairs, so that any providential aspect is missing from this deity.[21] In particular, the deity cannot be influenced by any religious practices.

The UM, that is, the deity thinks not because it wants to but because its essence is thinking. Aristotle does not discuss the problem of the UM's freedom and free will and because the UM is pure energy, it cannot act differently than it does; a prerequisite of freedom is potency which is impossible in the undisturbed actuality of the deity.[22] To imitate such a deity, man would have to "renounce his most noble faculties beginning with his liberty." Aristotle sensed that because the UM is not a model of the good, a sage's mind actualized in the silence of his passions becomes such a model. By this, morality is separated from theodicy.[23]

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[19] The identification of the UM with God is sometimes contested on the grounds that in the crucial chapter 12 of *Metaphysics*, the word "God" is used seemingly in passing only in two fragments (Richard Bodéüs, *Aristotle and the Theology of the Living Immortals* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2000), p. 22) and so, the UM would be an equivalent of the Indian absolute (p. 41). However, this restraint in calling the UM God can, in fact, be considered an argument in favor of such an identification. Aristotle's vision of the transcendent and immobile God is far from the concept of divinity of popular religion. Therefore, Aristotle was simply cautious in introducing a new concept of divinity in the face of the memory of Socrates' fate and his own brush with the accusation of impiety.

[20] Bröcker, *Aristoteles*, p. 221.

[21] Interestingly, it can be claimed that, although the UM does not exercise providence over the world, the FH does, A.P. Bos, *Cosmic and Meta-cosmic Theology in Aristotle's Lost Dialogues* (Leiden: Brill, 1989), p. 72.

[22] See also Jules Simon, *Études sur la théodicée de Platon et d'Aristote* (Paris: Joubert, 1840), pp. 98–99; Elser, *Die Lehre des Aristoteles über das Wirken Gottes*, pp. 76–84.

[23] Lévêque, *Le premierMoteur et la nature dans le système d'Aristote*, p. 131.

The Unmoved Mover and the world

Aristotle discusses the doctrine of the first UM in *Physics* 7–8 and *Metaphysics* 12. A major difference between these two discussions is that in *Physics* the UM exercises efficient causality, whereas in *Metaphysics* only final causality is ascribed to the UM. Many commentators over the centuries have tried to reconcile these two accounts[24] and there does not seem to be a satisfactory resolution of the UM who is not only final cause but can be also an efficient cause, unless one type of causality is considered to be a form of another.[25] To some extent, such a claim is justified. In *Physics* 8, it is not clear how the UM imparts motion: how can an immaterial UM, substance without magnitude, actualize outside itself? And so it is possible to interpret *Physics* 8 in the spirit of final causality.[26]

The view as to whether the UM is capable of exercising efficient causality is of paramount importance for theology, religious practices, morality, and politics. Is God providence? What is the meaning of religious practices when he is not? What is the ultimate justification of any moral precepts? Is there any need for theological considerations when designing a political system? These are questions that require some theological guidance to be answered. And the guidance provided by Aristotle is not always unambiguous.

The UM can be a providential deity only if it can be an efficient cause. Therefore, on the theological plane, the problem of the kind of causality the UM can exercise translates into the problem of whether God can reach to the world to guide it and intervene in human affairs. There has been a centuries-long effort by many interpreters to answer the problem of whether Aristotle's God is capable of providential activity or not.[27] Yet, in the many writings of Aristotle, there are surprisingly few passages that can be interpreted as indications of God's activity in the world.[28]

Among the passages that "explicitly and unequivocally" describe God as an efficient cause is Aristotle's discussion of Anaxagoras' views.[29] When arguing for

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[24] A few such attempts are presented in, for example, in Elders, *Aristotle's Theology*, pp. 11–13.

[25] A claim is made that final causality is just a kind of efficient causality, R. Jolivet, 'Aristote et la notion de création', *Revue des Sciences Philosophiques et Théologiques* 19 (1930), p. 36, and that in God "the final cause implies and absorbs the efficient," Francis X. Meehan, *Efficient Causality in Aristotle and St. Thomas* (Washington: The Catholic University of America Press, 1940), p. 97.

[26] René Mugnier, *La Théorie du premier moteur et l'évolution de la pansée aristotélicienne* (Paris: Vrin, 1930), pp. 112–113.

[27] A long list of names on both sides of the discussion is provided by Elser, *Die Lehre des Aristoteles über das Wirken Gottes*, pp. 19–31.

[28] Brentano, who staunchly defends the view that the Aristotelian God is active in the world, musters only a handful of quotations from Aristotle in support of his view, Franz Brentano, *Psychology of Aristotle* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977 [1867]), pp. 162–168; Rolfes, who sides with Brentano in this discussion, does not fair any better, Eugen Rolfes, *Die aristotelische Auffassung vom Verhältnisse Gottes zur Welt und zum Menschen* (Berlin: Mayer & Müller, 1892), pp. 99–130.

[29] Brentano, *Psychology of Aristotle*, p. 163.

the existence of an UM, Aristotle praises Anaxagoras for his view of the impassive and unmixed Mind that is the principle of motion, "for it could cause motion in this way only by being itself unmoved and have control only by being unmixed" (*Phys.* 256b24–27). In this praise, the focus is on the existence of the cosmic Mind, impassive and separate from the world, which is the cause of world's motion. It is secondary here, what type of causality it is, although for Anaxagoras this is efficient causality and so it seems to be in the context of *Physics* 8. When Aristotle says that Anaxagoras is like a sober man, because he assumes that the cosmic Mind is the cause of the world (*Met.* 984b15–20), he, again, praises him for assuming the existence of a cosmic Mind that is the cause of the world, not for the type of causality.[30] The causality of Mind is, in fact, criticized by Aristotle (985a18–21). Aristotle wanted to establish some metaphysical pedigree for his UM, if only partial. And Anaxagoras' Mind is the closest predecessor: it is an impassive and unmixed mover of, so to say, other-worldly substance, the mind.[31]

Consider now the problem of the orderliness of the universe. The experience shows that nature is full of regular processes, of chains of events that are repetitiously recurring, of events that cannot be explained as the result of mere chance. The world is ordered and the motions of heavenly bodies are regular, but also the sublunary world is a proof of an underlying order. Order means design, means acting with a purpose. Aristotle affirms a general fact that "the world is well ordered, that is, everything is predisposed in the way that assures its conservation and its perpetuity in the present state. This is tantamount to an affirmation that the activity of nature in the world has the actualization of the good in it as its result."[32] This means that nature produces nothing in vain, but always produces the best among the possibilities for the being of a particular kind (*De incessu an.* 704b16–17, *Pol.* 1253a9, 1256b21). That is, nature is teleological, ordered, free of random results. "How is there to be order unless there is something eternal and independent and permanent," asks Aristotle rhetorically (*Met.* 1060a26–27), and he states that order is "the work of divine power, such that holds everything together" (*Pol.* 1326a32–33). Work in what sense? A metaphor is used to indicate this sense.

The good in nature is found like the good in the army, where "the good is found both in the order and in the leader, and more in the latter; for he is not because of the order (διὰ τὴν τάξιν),[33] but it is because of him" (*Met.* 1075a11–15). Although God is a counterpart of the general, it may be argued that God's causality is not

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[30] In particular, Anaxagoras is not praised "for having admitted the *Nous* as the *efficient* cause," as claimed, with his emphasis, by Meehan, *Efficient Causality in Aristotle and St. Thomas*, pp. 91, 15 note16.

[31] In a rather unphilosophical outburst Brentano says that Aristotle "would not be such a fool as to praise Anaxagoras because of an absolutely false, altogether erroneous, opinion," *Psychology of Aristotle*, p. 164. Far from being a fool, Aristotle praises Anaxagoras for what is true and acceptable to him because, from Aristotle's perspective, Anaxagoras' view of Mind is anything but absolutely false and altogether erroneous.

[32] Augustin Mansion, *Introduction à la physique aristotélicienne* (Louvain: L'Institut superieur de philosophie, 1946), pp. 262, 270.

[33] The preposition διά followed by a noun in the accusative may signify final causality (*Met.* 983a28–29; *Phys.* 194b19), argues Elders, *Aristotle's Theology*, p. 271, but it rather

necessarily that of the general.[34] In this metaphor, God can still remain the final cause and the general an efficient cause. The orderliness of nature is guaranteed by the existence of the UM and nature's desire to somehow resemble the UM. The latter can still be a self-absorbed deity whether the world exists or not. The order is effectively realized by nature itself although it would not unleash its energy without having a model in the UM. In that sense, "nature is everywhere the cause of order" (*Phys.* 252a12). The metaphor is thus very weak. The general is aware of the troops, whereas the UM does not know the world exists. The general knows where he leads the army; the UM does not know the destination of the world. The army is actively guided by the general; the world, and in particular, the FH, guides itself by glancing at the unmoving UM. It is not easy to see what the world sees in the UM to stir it. The unceasing mental activity? Why then is it translated into locomotion and not into mental activity as well? A claim can be made that Aristotle compares the UM to a general because "a general is a being that possesses his existence in himself."[35] But does not the army have its existence in itself? Such an explanation dilutes the metaphor into insignificance and it is thus not without reason to say that the "beautiful and true comparison that the author of the *Metaphysics* invokes here turns against his doctrine and condemns it."[36]

In one statement used in support of the efficient causality of the UM, Aristotle says that "even God and good man are capable of doing bad things, but that is not their character" (*Top.* 126a34–35). To be sure, God chooses not to do it. And this statement is to indicate the omnipotence of God.[37] However, it is not God's character to be capable of anything because God is pure actuality. There is no unrealized, unactualized potentiality in God that at one time lies hidden and at another time blossoms. It thus seems that this remark, made about God in a rather nontheological context, refers more to a mythological divinity than to the divine UM.[38]

In a "noteworthy passage" pointing to God as an active principle,[39] Aristotle says that since individual beings are not eternal, God "fulfilled the perfection of the universe by making coming-to-be uninterrupted" (*De gen. et corr.* 336b31–32); that is, the continuity of generation and corruption is an imitation of an eternal being and God is said to be the cause of this continuity. However, this is simply an expression

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points to efficient causality, states W.J. Verdenius, 'Traditional and personal elements in Aristotle's religion', *Phronesis* 5 (1960), pp. 61, 67 note 33.

[34] Gerson, *God and Greek philosophy*, p. 136.

[35] Mugnier, *La Théorie du premier moteur et l'évolution de la pansée aristotélicienne*, p. 127.

[36] Lévêque, *Le premier Moteur et la nature dans le système d'Aristote*, p. 132. Also, it is easier to quote metaphors of this sort than to interpret *Metaphysics* 12 and *Physics* 8 in the sense of divine providence, as stated by Simon, *Études sur la théodicée de Platon et d'Aristote*, p. 104; cf. Alfred Boehm, *Die Gottesidee bei Aristoteles auf ihren religiösen Charakter untersucht* (Strassburg: Goeller, 1914), p. 109; Karl Zell, *Das Verhältniss der aristotelischen Philosophie zur Religion* (Mainz: Kirchheim, 1863), p. 23.

[37] Brentano, *Psychology of Aristotle*, p. 165.

[38] Elser, *Die Lehre des Aristoteles über das Wirken Gottes*, p. 82, hesitatingly agrees with this possibility.

[39] Brentano, *Psychology of Aristotle*, p. 165.

of the view that "nature strives always after the better" (b27–28), being is better than nonbeing (b28–29), the eternal is better than temporary and so nature strives after the eternal. And so, there is an uninterrupted process of generation of new individuals, thereby the species always exists through them. The cause of this is circular motion (336b34–337a1). Circular motion, however, as Aristotle proves in *Physics* 8 is eternal. It is maintained through the FH's desire for the UM. Thus, God's role in the world's continuous existence again can be reduced to his mere existence. God makes coming-to-be uninterrupted by simply existing and being desired and loved by the world. It is thus not necessary to state that in this fragment God is "evidently a metaphorical representation of nature."[40] This fact is not particularly evident. It is more natural to see in this God as the UM in his customary role of final cause.

When discussing spontaneity and chance, Aristotle says that there are effects caused by something accidental and "no accidental cause can be prior to a cause *per se*. Spontaneity and chance, therefore, are posterior to intelligence and nature" (*Phys*. 198a5–10). It is said that in this fragment, Aristotle "clearly teaches that the mind is the active principle of the entire world."[41] However, it seems that Aristotle clearly teaches here that the mind's causality is prior to the causality of accidental causes. The nature of the two causalities is, in this fragment, irrelevant.

In another terse passage, after arguing against contrary circular motions, Aristotle states that "God and nature do nothing in vain" (*De caelo* 271a33) instead of his usual "nature does nothing in vain." However, it was Plato who argued for the viability of such celestial motions (*Timaeus* 36bc) in the world molded by a perfect Demiurge, and so Aristotle's remark can simply be an allusion to the Demiurge.[42]

The UM is an ultimate, final cause. However, even if the UM had been considered an efficient cause instead of final cause, it would have been like a daydreaming man[43] since it would not have had any goal or motive to exercise this force. Without a goal, the force could be either exercised randomly or exercised not at all. The UM, in this case, would be full of power which could not be actualized and as such it would be redundant.[44]

Such fragments as quoted here are far from supplying convincing arguments that Aristotle's God is an efficient cause, an omnipotent being, a providence who watches over the world. This poses a practical problem. If we accept that God is completely

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[40] Gerson, *God and Greek Philosophy*, p. 287 note 109; "another name for nature," Bodéüs, *Aristotle and the Theology of the Living Immortals*, p. 162.

[41] Brentano, *Psychology of Aristotle*, p. 165.

[42] Bodéüs, *Aristotle and the Theology of the Living Immortals*, p. 64.

[43] Not thinking about anything would make the UM resemble a sleeping man, *Met.* 1074b17–18. This possibility of the UM's being an efficient cause is purely theoretical, because the UM has no dimension and thus it cannot have common extremity with the FH, that is, the UM cannot touch the FH (*De gen. et corr.* 323a10–12); but without having any contact, no mechanic action can be exercised and no mechanic impulse given to the FH (*Phys*. 202a7–8, *De gen. et corr.* 1.6–7, *De motu anim.* 3).

[44] A claim can be thus made that for Aristotle, final cause is necessary, but not the efficient cause, Simon, *Études sur la théodicée de Platon et d'Aristote*, p. 111, and that the first cause is not the UM's will, but the law according to which the world knows the UM and aspires to it, p. 46.

detached from the world and influences nothing through his own activity (efficient causality), what should be the role of religious practices in political and social life? Aristotle addresses the topic of religion in the city in a few passing remarks. He says that one of the six functions of the city is to take care of religion (*Pol.* 1328b12, 1322b18–29). For this reason, priests are indispensable in the state (1329a27–34), temples have to be erected (1331a24), and religion should be funded from public coffers (1330a8–9, 1267b34–35, 1272a19–20). Religious practices should exist even if they include some unpalatable elements. He says that the rulers should "take care that there be no image or picture representing unseemly actions, except in the temples of the gods at whose festivals the law permits even ribaldry and whom the law permits to be worshipped by persons of mature age" (*Pol.* 1336b14–19). This indicates that traditional religion is a necessary evil to be tolerated and even encouraged as part of the constitution of the city – not for its veracity but for its social and political value. Organized religion with its sacrifices and "assigning honors to the gods" is important for the maintenance of social cohesion (*EN* 1160a20–30), and thus worship of traditional gods is something that ought to be done (*Top.* 105a5; *EN* 1162a4; *Pol.* 1329a29–32). In this approach, religion is reduced to a political expedient, needed even in an ideal city to maintain its integrity. It is thus true that in such a statement about religion, there is an air of condescension: for Aristotle, "the πολλοί are weaker minds with limited access to the truth. The religion of the cities may be explained … but it is not accepted as true."[45]

It must be assumed here that in these remarks an existing religion is meant because Aristotle does not elaborate on the topic.[46] In the *Politics*, he is not interested in rectifying the traditional religion, but admits its use in the city. Who are the gods of this religion? Young Aristotle expressed belief in traditional gods (Seneca, *Quest. nat.* 7.30.1 = fr. 14), but later he said that the gods of the forefathers, envisioned by them in the form of men or animals, really represent "first substances" (*Met.* 1074b3,8–9) or movers of heavenly spheres. The myths are thus not altogether false. They recognize that the world is encircled by a divinity, but "everything else is a mythological embellishment devised to attract the multitude to advance the laws and the common interest" (1074b3–5).

In view of this mythological embellishment, when Aristotle says that "we think that the gods and the heroes differ from men by virtue of great superiority" in the body and soul (*Pol*. 1332b17–20), he does not express his own conviction, but reports on the concept of divinity in traditional religion. Also, when he refers to the wise being the dearest to the gods, he does it in a noncommittal fashion by stating that "if the gods have any care for human affairs, as is thought, it would be reasonable both that they should delight in that which was best and most akin to them and that they should reward those who love and honor this most as caring for the things that are dear to them (which is the mind) and acting both rightly and nobly" (*EN* 1179a24–29). The gods are important here only as much as the divine UM is the

[45] Friedrich Solmsen, 'Theophrastus and political aspects of the belief in providence', *Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies* 19 (1978), p. 97.

[46] "The existence of a positive religion, namely the Greek popular religion, is a presupposition and one of the fundamental conditions of the model state of the philosopher," Zell, *Das Verhältniss der aristotelischen Philosophie zur Religion*, p. 33.

mind whereby caring for the mind is the sign of wisdom. Aristotle's interest is in the mind, not in the gods whose existence is only admitted hypothetically.[47]

In another fragment, Aristotle says that friendship of children to parents and of men to gods is good because they are benefactors and are causes of their being, their nourishment, and their education (*EN* 1162a4–7). It is not certain that "they" refers to the gods and not to parents only. A few paragraphs earlier, only parents are mentioned as responsible for the existence, nourishment, and education of their children with no reference to the gods (1161a14).[48] However, even if "they" also encompasses the gods, the latter's responsibility for men's existence could be understood as the already mentioned fact that the mind comes from outside and the mind is the most important distinguishing element of man. In that sense, man exists as a man by the infusion of mind, which in turn, allows for nourishment and education proper to men.

Theology

Introduction of the UM into the system is the result of Aristotle's conviction that on the level of individuals, potency precedes actuality and on the level of principles, actuality is prior to potentiality. It is thus necessary that a principle of motion exists in which essence is act, that is, pure act.[49] Combined with an attempt of avoiding infinity in explanation, this leads to introducing an UM that exists in an unceasing actuality.

In Aristotle's system, the UM is needed to explain why events take place, not what their mechanics is.[50] To explain the latter, efficient causes are used. Final cause saturates the universe with meaning, with intentionality. Chains of events, regardless of how ordered and organized the results may be, are meaningless if there is no goal which they strive to attain. Order cannot emerge by execution of efficient causes, order must be a given, a cosmic prerequisite which makes the universe ordered and meaningful. In Plato's world the Demiurge infuses this meaning by organizing the prime matter of triangles into a most perfect cosmos; the Demiurge accomplishes it by molding the matter by its own power. In Aristotle's world this order is detached from the world, does not come into contact with it. However, the world itself is able to have some grasp of the order and, seeing its desirable perfection, does everything to become closer to it, to make itself more perfect with this perfect, but detached and unattainable goal in sight. The world, itself material, cannot become immaterial like the prime unmoved mover. The world, full of beings that are unions of form and matter, cannot become a pure form. But at least it can become eternal, if only in time, to approximate the atemporal eternity of the prime mover. This is done by incessantly bringing potentialities into actualities, whereby the world approximates

[47] Cf. Elser, *Die Lehre des Aristoteles über das Wirken Gottes*, p. 144.

[48] Cf. ibid., pp. 203–204.

[49] Cf. Lévêque, *Le premier moteur et la nature dans le système d'Aristote*, p. 88.

[50] Kahn, 'The place of the prime mover in Aristotle's teleology', p. 189; the prime mover is needed to explain that "the general causation of change by the power of actuality to produce 'another like itself,' which is thus seen as a derivation of all generated actuality from the eternal actuality of the prime mover," p. 190.

the eternal actuality of the UM, actuality undisturbed by any potentiality, pure actuality, as phrased in the middle ages.

Aristotle's UM has the role similar to Plato's ideas in the sense of the efficient cause having something outside itself. Plato's Demiurge uses these ideas to mold the world; the demiurge is active throughout the creation process and then, after creating the gods and the world-soul the demiurge endows them with powers to maintain the integrity of the world. In Aristotle's system, the world itself has all the functions of Plato's Demiurge, all the force needed to carry out natural processes are inherent in the world, and all the intelligence needed to execute these processes is already there. The only element which is missing is a desire to do this. And that is where the UM plays its role in Aristotle's universe. Plato's Demiurge looked to ideas as models, but the motivation was Demiurge's. Aristotle's world looks to the UM for a motive, but no models are needed since natural laws existing from eternity encompass them. Plato's efficient cause, the Demiurge, who is also a final cause, looks beyond himself to the world of ideas that serve him as a formal cause to execute his force; in Aristotle's system, the efficient cause, the world's desire or appetite, looks beyond itself to the UM that serves it as a final cause to keep on going; the world has already embedded in itself the formal cause.

Theological issues are mentioned by Aristotle in his discussion only in passing and play primarily the role of illustration, metaphor, and noncommittal reference to something that the reader knows from everyday life. For Aristotle, theology is of little importance; it is a barely existing domain that has to be referenced because others do that or because the consistency of his system requires it. But this is always done half-heartedly, tersely, not infrequently even disdainfully. Religion plays a marginal role in politics, and, surprisingly, no role in ethics. The traditional gods are mentioned but hardly accepted. The supreme deity, the UM, is assumed to exist to solve a problem of the beginning of motion and has no religious significance.

By introducing the UM into his system, Aristotle wants to resolve the problem of the first mover, but he ascribes to his UM the smallest possible role. The UM's role in Aristotle's system is to serve as an explanatory principle for the problem of causation. It is a final cause, but it resides outside the world. Aristotle attempts to explain the world by allowing as minimal an intervention by the supernatural as possible. The UM is a theoretical construct which is only verbally connected with the deity of theology, with the supreme being of religion. The UM is a footnote in Aristotle's system, limited to passively performing one role: to exist so that it can be a final cause – and nothing else. It is not unlike Kant's God who is only reluctantly introduced by Kant as a postulate of practical reason. It took Thomas Aquinas to put Aristotle's system right side up beginning with God and basing his system on God's attributes and then proceeding to the explanation of man and the world.

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Chapter 15

The Old Academy

Very little survives concerning the views of the Early Academicians. Their books, numerous as they were, did not survive, and their views have to be reconstructed from a very few quotations and a small number of testimonies and discussions of their ideas. This is the situation with the views of Speusippus, the first scholarch of the Academy after Plato.

Speusippus

Probably the most reliable views about Speusippus' philosophy can be found in Aristotle. However, Aristotle mentions Speusippus by name merely four times. Using these explicit mentions, a handful of allusions to his views can also be found in Aristotle's writings. For the reconstruction of Speusippus' theology, two explicit references to him in *Metaphysics* are of primary importance.

In the first fragment, we read that according to Aristotle, Plato distinguished three eternal substances – the forms, the mathematicals, and the sensibles – "and Speusippus made still more kinds of substance, starting from the one, and making principles for each kind of substance, one for numbers, another for spatial magnitudes, and then another for the soul" (*Met*. 1028b21–24 = F29a Tarán). Aristotle even distinguished two levels of numbers, formal numbers that are ideas (1086a4–5, 1088b34, 1090b35) and mathematical numbers that differ from formal numbers in that there are many instances of the same number (987b14–18, 991a4, 1079a35).

In another fragment, in which Speusippus is mentioned by name, we learn that for him "the most beautiful and best are not at the beginning (or, in the *arche*) because the *archai* both of plants and of animals are causes, but the beautiful and the complete are in the things from these" (*Met*. 1072b32–34 = F42a).

It is significant that among the three substances listed in F29a, no forms are mentioned, although Aristotle names them in reference to Plato right before and right after referring to Speusippus, when naming "some who say forms and numbers have the same nature," which can only be Xenocrates. This allows us to assume that Speusippus denied the existence of forms. This assumption is reinforced by Aristotle's frequent mention of those who are said to reject forms and retain numbers – mathematical, not formal – only. For example, Aristotle mentions those "who do not think there are ideas … but [think] that mathematicals exist and numbers are the first among beings, and the one itself is their *arche*" (1083a20–24 = F34).[1] Because

[1] Stronger still is a mention of those "who make the mathematicals [exist] apart from the sensibles seeing the difficulty and fictitiousness about the forms, [and who] abandoned

of the reference to the existence of mathematicals (numbers and magnitudes) and naming numbers first (in F29a numbers are listed first), it is commonly assumed that Aristotle refers to Speusippus.

Because Speusippus is said to distinguish more substances than Plato and because sensible substances are generally assumed to exist (1069a31 = F31), it may be safe to state that Speusippus distinguishes at least four substances: numbers, spatial magnitudes, souls, and sensibles. Aristotle mentions no upper limit set on the number of substances. To garner more information about Speusippus' ontology, we may refer to chapter 4 of Iamblichus' *De communi mathematica scientia*. Speusippus is not named there, but the chapter is believed to present Speusippus' ideas because only Speusippus denied that the highest principles can be good or evil, only he claimed that the good and beautiful appear later, and only he posited a pair of principles for each sphere of being. And these are the crucial ideas presented in *De communi* iv.[2]

In this work, five kinds (γενή) seem to be referred to, but only two are discussed, the first kind, numbers, and the second kind that includes lines, solids, and flat areas. The fourth kind and the fifth kind are only mentioned as the last ones ("at the extreme" of the hierarchy, 18.9), and the third kind is not mentioned at all.[3]

The justification for the view expressed in F42a is given in a passage in which Aristotle refers to "a thinker who avoided attaching the good to the one." Aristotle says that because "generation is from contraries," assuming that the one is good would entail that the plurality, the contrary element, has to be identified with evil (1091b30–35 = F45a).[4] What is important here is the assumption that in the generation of numbers, two contrary principles are mentioned, the one and the plurality, which is based on a general principle that "generation is from contraries." Therefore, each substance should have two contraries out of which it emerges.

Except for the two principles of numbers, the one and the plurality (τὸ πλῆθος), we can also find principles of magnitude, namely the point (ἡ στιγμή) and "other matter like plurality, but not [identical to] plurality" (1085a32–34 = F51).[5] Principles

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ideal number and posited mathematical" (*Met.* 1086a2–5 = F35). Cf. R.M. Dancy, *Two Studies in the Early Academy* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991), pp. 99–101.

[2] Philip Merlan, *From Platonism to Neoplatonism* (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1960 [1954]), p. 100. Text in Leonardo Tarán, *Speusippus of Athens*, Leiden: Brill 1981, 90–92, text and translation in Dancy, *Two Studies in the Early Academy*, pp. 114–119. The fragment was first introduced as Speusippean by Merlan and is commonly assumed to be quotation or at least summary of a Speusippus book. Tarán is one of the few who objects to this ascription, but see John Dillon, 'Speusippus in Iamblichus', *Phronesis* 29 (1984), 325–332.

[3] Needless to say, there is no unanimity about the substances and principles, cf. H.A.S. Tarrant, 'Speusippus' ontological classification', *Phronesis* 19 (1974), pp. 131, 134. Mathematicals are compared to bodies, "the things contemplated in connection to life" and the intelligibles (*De communi* 18.13–19), but this is in fragment 18.1–23 that appears abruptly as a conclusion of discussion that is absent, and thus is considered Iamblichus' rather than Speusippus'.

[4] Heinrich von Stein, *Sieben Bücher zur Geschichte des Platonismus* (Göttingen, 1864; reprinted Frankfurt am Main: Minerva, 1965), vol. 2, p. 143.

[5] Principles of number: F34, F38, F39, F40, F45a, F46a, F51, F65, *De communi* 15.6–7,11; principles of magnitude: F51, F28.61, F50, F52, F65; Tarán, *Speusippus of Athens*,

of the soul are not known. If we assume that, according to Speusippus, there are five substances,[6] then there have to be ten principles of these substances. In this way, we arrive at the perfect number ten, or *decad*, which was extolled by Speusippus.[7]

Before proceeding any further, we need to address the problem of separation of the good from the one.

The problem Speusippus wanted to avoid with his separation of the good from the one is that the one is a principle of numbers, and thus each number would be good and there would arise a profusion of goods (1091b22–26). However, it is hard to see why this is objectionable. If all numbers are good, what is bad about that? However, maybe this is not Speusippus' objection, but Aristotle's.[8] Another objection is that, because the plurality would have to be evil if the one were good, the generated numbers would be mixtures of good and evil (b35–37). Again, why is this unsatisfactory? The case can be argued either way. From a purely scientific standpoint, numbers are neither good nor bad – nor mixtures of these two values – just as they are neither hard nor soft, colored nor colorless. But, because of the wide applicability of numbers and the ubiquitous presence of numerical proportions (after Pythagoreans, at least the example of music and astronomy can be given), numbers contribute to goodness, in the sense of orderliness of the world, and hence they are good. However, mathematics, and thus numbers, can be applied to evil purposes so that evil may be seen as inherent in numbers, not in misapplications. Therefore, the second argument for separating the good from the one – that namely numbers would be mixtures of good and evil – is also weak. A possible explanation is that the good and the evil in the two principles of a substance would cancel each other,[9] so that the result of two value-laden principles would be value-free.

According to Speusippus, a value appears in a thing at a certain stage of its development. "For the seed comes from other individuals which are prior and complete, and a first thing is not seed but the complete being," just as a man precedes a seed (1072b35–1073a3 = F45a). The man that develops from the seed is good or bad not because the seed is such, but because his father was good or bad. The seed is, presumably, just a shell that is used in the transfer of a value without itself having this value. A being must be at a certain stage of development for the good and the beautiful to appear, that is, when "the nature of the beings has made some progress" (1091a35 = F44).

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pp. 33, 324–325. The material principle is assumed to be position, distention (spatial distance), and place, *De communi* 17.13–19, Merlan, *From Platonism to Neoplatonism*, pp. 111–112, or dimension, Tarán, *Speusippus of Athens*, p. 45.

[6] It is conjectured that there are only six principles, namely five material principles (for example, plurality) and one formal principle; the one is a common starting point for each kind although under different disguise: as the one for numbers or point for magnitudes, W.G. Rabinowitz, according to Merlan, *From Platonism to Neoplatonism*, p. 130; Tarrant, 'Speusippus' ontological classification', pp. 136–137.

[7] *Theologoumena arithmeticae* 82.10–85.23 = F28.

[8] Tarán, *Speusippus of Athens*, p. 344.

[9] Fritz P. Hager, *Gott und das Böse im antiken Platonismus* (Würzburg: Könighausen & Neumann, 1987), p. 71.

Where do the good and beautiful come from? If they are transferred from a father to a son through the means of a seed, there is no problem when it is assumed that the world is ungenerated, just like Aristotle's world. The good is thus ungenerated as well, and it is unraveled in beings who reach a certain developmental stage. Whether Speusippus would agree that the world is ungenerated is uncertain. As a Platonist, he may follow the paradigm of the *Timaeus* in which the world is clearly generated, unless it is assumed that the *Timaeus* should be taken merely as a metaphor. There is, in fact, a strong indication that Speusippus interpreted the *Timaeus* metaphorically and was speaking about generation "for didactic reasons," "not implying that the universe really had a beginning."[10] Therefore, the statement that God, "the maker of the all," used the *decad*, "the most natural and most mystically completing of the beings, a sort of artistic form for the cosmic accomplishments," "as an all-perfect paradigm"[11] in creating the world should be understood atemporally because the *decad*, as any number, is coeternal with other beings. For Speusippus, in the Pythagorean spirit, the decad summarized the harmoniousness of the cosmos.

Whether the world is generated or not, there is still a problem of the source of the good and the beautiful. The good may be considered a derivative attribute, a manifestation of something else, just as color is a manifestation of the frequency of light waves, and the durability of a material is a manifestation of the speed of the atoms constituting it. Similarly, it can be claimed that the good is a manifestation of orderliness of a being and so is its beauty. The more ordered and the more fitted to a particular end a being is, the better and more beautiful it seems. In this way, by consigning the idea of the good, the idea of ideas, to the position of a derived entity, Speusippus would reject one of the cornerstones of Plato's philosophy. However, in this way it is just a shift of the problem because the source of the orderly arrangement of the being has to be determined.

The idea of an order is given in a hierarchy of beings and one level of being depends on another for its existence and its attributes. According to the rule that "a principle is not yet such as are the things of which it is a principle" (*De communi* 15.9–10), the one is beyond being. In conjunction with the plurality, the one gives rise to numbers and thus numbers are beings – they are endowed with existence. Plurality itself does not have to be a being because numbers become beings due to the one, not to plurality. Also, plurality is not an attribute of any number (although it can characterize sets of numbers). For geometricals the situation is more complex. A point is a formal principle of a line, and its material principle is position, where position should not characterize lines – and it does not, if it is taken as a point-position. Spatial interval (interval of places, διάστασις τόπων) becomes a material principle of areas with lines being their formal principle, and then area becomes the formal principle and place (space, τόπος) the material principle for solids (17.13–19). There are thus three material sub-principles of geometricals, which means that the word "kind" is well-chosen: a kind can correspond to multiple sub-principles.

In this light, a Speusippean definition of the soul can acquire much more meaning. *De communi* does not mention the third kind, and, because soul is

[10] *De caelo* 279b32–280a10 = F61a and a scholion F61b, F28.13–14.

[11] *Theologoumena arithmeticae* 83.1–5 = F28.10–14.

mentioned as third in Aristotle's report, it may be assumed that the missing third kind corresponds to the soul. As such, the soul depends on the two previous kinds, numbers and geometricals. When we read that soul is "the idea of the all-extended" (Iamblichus, *De anima* in Stobaeus 1.49.32 = F54a), this does not have to be meant as a simple reduction of the substance of soul to the substance of magnitude, which is impossible: substances are irreducible to one another, each having different principles (*Met*. 1075b38–1076a1 = F30). However, the soul substance is ontologically dependent on the magnitude substance; therefore, the geometrical aspect is infused into the unknown principle of the soul and manifests itself there as a spatial aspect of the soul.[12] Furthermore, because dependence on magnitude means an indirect dependence on numbers, we can also accept the testimony that, according to Speusippus, soul is among the things that emerge from the one and the numbers (Theophrastus, *Met.* 6a23–b6 = F59). Soul is neither number nor magnitude, but emerges from them.

It needs to be stressed that the hierarchical dependence is of ontological, not temporal order. Speusippean substances are eternal. For example, in F29a, Speusippus' substances are put side by side with Plato's, which are eternal, so Speusippus' substances should also be considered eternal. Therefore, it cannot be stated that numbers existed first, then magnitudes. We can only say that if numbers had ceased to exist, magnitudes – and any other substances – would have ceased to exist as well, but if magnitudes had been eradicated, numbers would still have existed. Speusippus uses a generational language, but the language should not be taken literally. The language of generation is used to represent causal order: "The earlier entities in the generation story are prior to the later ones in that they are causes for them; the latter depend for their existence on the former."[13]

It is clear that there is a predetermined order in which the kinds ontologically unfold. The kinds originate "as nature proceeds" (*De communi* 16.12), "thus, there is some kind of concatenation between the spheres; all are the product of one procession."[14] This procession, this unfolding sequence is either built into the nature of the materials and principles or it is overseen by a higher ordering principle. That there is such an overseeing ordering principle may be implied by the statement that at the beginning, the first kind, numbers, are the result of coming together of the one and plurality "according to a certain persuasive necessity" (πιθανὴ ἀνάνκη, *De communi* 15.17). It is sometimes suggested that πιθανή should be considered passive, not active, to render persuasible or persuadable necessity.[15] Although it is usually observed that this is an allusion to *Timaeus* 48a, the analysis is not pursued any further.

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[12] John Dillon, *The Middle Platonists* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996), p. 17.

[13] Dancy, *Two Studies in the Early Academy*, p. 85. Also, different levels of being differ in that "each next level brings to the previous level some specific categorical novum and so points to more determinations," Jens Halfwassen, 'Speusipp und die Unendlichkeit des Einen: Ein neues Speusipp-Testimonium bei Proklos und seine Bedeutung', *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie* 74 (1992), p. 62 note 72.

[14] Merlan, *From Platonism to Neoplatonism*, p. 118.

[15] Merlan, *From Platonism to Neoplatonism*, p. 116; Dancy, *Two Studies in the Early Academy*, pp. 115, 175 note 253; cf. Tarán, *Speusippus of Athens*, p. 95, note 426.

In the *Timaeus*, Plato describes the way the Demiurge creates the world using pre-existing beings. One of these beings is prime matter ruled by necessity, and the Demiurge was controlling necessity "by persuading (τῷ πείθειν) her to direct most of the things that come to be toward what is best" (48a). That is, necessity has some measure of intelligence to be persuaded, not just forced, and it is persuaded to make matter into the cosmos, into an ordered and harmonious whole under the direction of the Demiurge that uses eternal ideas as models. There are thus two powers, the Demiurge and persuadable necessity. The two powers have to come in contact so that the cosmos can be created. Is it possible that Speusippus may have considered necessity redundant? It is imaginable that in the Speusippean universe there is only one power which is the result of blending of Plato's Demiurge with persuadable necessity, whereby Persuasive Necessity arises. Necessity now plays the role of the Demiurge; it is not the persuadable force, not a force to be persuaded, because it is now as reasonable as Plato's Demiurge is. This interpretation can be reinforced by the fact that in *Timaeus* 47e–48a Plato writes about the mind (*nous*) that is the persuader. At the same time, in the opening chapter of Stobaeus' *Eclogae*, "about God," Aetius quotes Speusippus' statement that "the mind is identical neither with the one nor with the good, but is of particular nature" (1.7.20 = F58). This statement can be taken to mean that for Speusippus, God is mind, and this God-*nous* is in an ontological category of his own. It is thus possible that the Demiurge-*nous* and persuadable necessity are for Speusippus one entity, namely Persuasive Necessity or God-*nous*. In this way, God is a seat of orderliness of the universe. This is made more explicit in Cicero's statement that "following his uncle Plato in positing a kind of living (*animalem*)[16] force by which all things are ruled [Speusippus] seeks to eradicate awareness of the gods from [men's] minds" (Cicero, *ND* 1.32 = F56a). Speusippus expresses here his anti-polytheistic stance by postulating one divine force whose functions are divided between different divinities in popular religion. Cicero's statement is echoed by Minucius Felix who says that Speusippus held "God to be a natural, living force by which all things are ruled" (*Octavius* 19.7 = F56b).

Where, ontologically, can God be placed? *De communi* mentions five kinds of beings. As we have seen, the second kind, magnitudes, is truly compound by having different sub-substances and sub-principles. It is easy to put all the sub-substances on the same plane with substances, and this is what happens in Asclepius' statement in which there are separate substances for numbers, mind, soul, point, line, and surface (*In Met.* 377.34–378.3 = F29c).[17] It is interesting that Asclepius singles out mind as one of the substances. This at least indicates that the mind has a different ontological status than numbers, magnitudes, and soul; that is, mind is "of particular nature," as Aetius phrases it. Not being the one, but steering its – and the plurality's – course to give rise to numbers, God-*nous* is elevated above it; it is a reality higher than the one.[18]

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[16] It is clear that *animalem* = *animatem*, says Tarán, *Speusippus of Athens*, p. 374.

[17] Cf. Tarrant, 'Speusippus' ontological classification', p. 137.

[18] This reverses the order of the one being elevated above *nous* ascribed to Speusippus by Hans J. Krämer, *Der Ursprung der Geistmetaphysik* (Amsterdam: Grüner, 1967), pp. 216–217, 221.

Now, two points have to be mentioned, the ontological status of the one and its self-sufficiency.

An interesting problem in Speusippean metaphysics is the ontological status of the one. Aristotle says that "the one itself is not even a being" (1092a14–15 = F43). It is debated whether this phrase is a conclusion drawn by Speusippus or by Aristotle who tries to indicate the absurdity to which Speusippus' premises lead. However, if it is Aristotle's own conclusion, he accomplishes very little; he simply states that Speusippus' metaphysics is not Aristotelian, which can hardly be a philosophical accomplishment because that much is obvious from the outset. If Speusippus did not draw this conclusion himself, he could readily agree with it because it is not inconsistent with his views. But it seems that he most likely expressed this view explicitly because it was nothing new in the Academy. There is a well-known statement in the *Republic* 509b which says that the good is beyond substance (ἐπέκεινα τῆς οὐσίας). For Plato, the good was identical with the one, but by departing from Plato, by severing the two, Speusippus could easily retain the ontological status of the one. Also, in *De communi* a possible ambiguity is dispelled by the statement that the one should not be even called being because, as already quoted, "a principle is not yet such as are the things of which it is a principle" (15.8–10). If God is not the one and yet controls the one, then God is also moved beyond being. God is a super-principle that is elevated above everything: being, what is beyond being, nonbeing, and what is beyond nonbeing.[19] In this, the divine mind transcends everything. Only later, with Middle Platonism begins the discussion whether the first principle transcends the *nous*.[20] For Speusippus, it is identical with it.

There is one more issue. *De communi* expressly states that the one is self-sufficient (16.3). On the other hand, Aetius' testimony is against identifying God-*nous* and the one. At least two solutions are possible. God can infuse the one with controlling (persuading) force so that the one can become self-sufficient whereby God does not have to participate directly in unfolding the course of ontological development of the universe. This would be done in the spirit of the *Timaeus* where the Demiurge, after initial work done by himself, hands over the creation of the world to the gods he created and withdraws to a divine respite (40e, 41a,d, 42e, 69c).

Another possibility is to view God as ontologically enveloping the one. The one would be God's attribute of sorts, that is self-sufficient because God is. By enveloping the one, God would envelop the whole of being and nonbeing. In this way, we could agree that because the mind is different from the one and the good, it can only be "an *Urgrund* elevated above the two principles." Speusippus could be compelled "to let the most beautiful and the best arise in the development of the world through

[19] Merlan, *From Platonism to Neoplatonism*, p. 127, postulates that in analogy to the one that is above being, it may be assumed that the principle of plurality is above nonbeing although responsible for nonbeing.

[20] John Whittaker, ''Επέκεινα νοῦ καὶ οὐσίας', *Vigiliae Christianae* 23 (1969), pp. 91–104, esp. pp. 102–104.

him (God) through the determination of the principles, so that the world is also the eternal work of God."[21]

Of the two possibilities, the first seems to be more likely as being closer to Plato's solution. In any event, the existence of God-*nous* defuses Aristotle's criticism which states:

> those who say that mathematical number is first and go on to generate one kind of substance after another and give different principles for each, make the substance of all a series of episodes (for one [substance] has no influence on another by its existence or non-existence), and [they give us] many principles; but the world must not be governed badly. "The rule of many is not good; let there be one ruler" [*Il*. 2.204]. (*Met*. 1075b37–1076a4 = F30)

God-*nous* is the one ruler and by positing a hierarchy of substances and principles, Speusippus escapes the criticism of creating a view of an episodic, that is, somewhat incoherent and uncoordinated, universe. The hierarchical and multi-level universe is a coherent whole because there is one transcendent God, an ontological source of the order in the cosmos.

Incidentally, the problem of Plato's succession in the Academy can be addressed. There has always been curiosity about why Speusippus rather than Aristotle was chosen as the successor of Plato. The reason may have been as prosaic as the Athenian property law that required that the property of the Academy be bequeathed to a male relative of Plato.[22] The problem of orthodoxy can be invoked, but it is clear that the core of Plato's philosophy, namely the theory of ideas, is rejected by Speusippus. This may mean that there was no official and formal doctrine of the ideas[23] or that this doctrine was secondary in considering the succession in the Academy. It seems that orthodoxy was important in making this decision. Arguably, the most important area of investigation for Plato was theology. The first dialogue, the *Euthyphro*, is devoted to the discussion of the problem of piety; the last dialogue, the *Laws*, is a lengthy delineation of the theocratic state of Magnesia. It seems, therefore, that Plato may have considered the importance ascribed to theology in electing the prospective scholarch. And certainly Aristotle's views are very weak in that respect. There are hardly any theological investigations in his writings, notwithstanding the marginal doctrine of the Unmoved Mover. If he had displayed in the Academy the same interest in theology, then it was a clear choice for Plato to elect Speusippus, who certainly did not view theology as a side issue. The involvement and seriousness with which theology was treated may have thus been predominant factors that determined Plato's choice.

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[21] August B. Krische, *Die theologischen Lehren der griechischen Denker* (Göttingen: Dieterichsche Buchhandlung, 1840), p. 256. Technically, the good is not a principle. Whichever concept of God is chosen, it seems to be too harsh to state that this is "not a particularly lofty idea of God," as assessed by A. Döring, 'Eudoxos von Knidos, Speusippos, und der Dialog Philebos', *Vierteljahrsschrift für wissenschaftliche Philosophie und Soziologie* 27 (1903), p. 117.

[22] Anton H. Chroust, 'Speusippus succeeds Plato in the scholarchate of the Academy', *Revue des Études Grecques* 84 (1971), pp. 339–340.

[23] Harold Cherniss, *The Riddle of the Early Academy* (New York: Russell & Russell, 1962 [1944]), p. 82.

Xenocrates

Speusippus was a scholarch for only eight years, and he was succeeded in 338 by Xenocrates, who came to Athens from Chalcedon on the Bosporus and remained the head of the Academy for twenty-five years. Xenocrates restored to a large extent Plato's orthodoxy and placed a heavy emphasis on theology.[24]

First of all, Xenocrates restores the ideas (forms). He says that a form is "a paradigmatic cause of naturally constituted things … a separate and divine cause" (Proclus, *In Parm.* 888.15–19 = fr. 30 Heinze). If this definition is not merely Xenocrates' report of Plato's philosophy, we can assume that Xenocrates himself retains forms in his own system, unlike Speusippus. Idea is not a creative cause, but a cause only as far as it is a paradigm, as also confirmed by Proclus' comment on Xenocrates' definition. In this, Xenocrates' definition agrees with Plato's view of the Demiurge creating the world using ideas as models.[25]

In a crucial theological fragment, Xenocrates considers "the monad and the dyad to be gods:"

> the one [the monad] as a male [principle] has the role of a father that rules in heaven, and calls it Zeus, the odd, and *nous*, that is for him the first god; the other [the dyad] as a female [principle] in the manner of the mother of gods rules over the region below the heaven, and she is for him the soul of the all. Also heaven is a god and so fiery stars are Olympian gods and other sublunary and invisible *daimones*. He also says that there are <some divine forces> that permeate material elements. One of them he calls <Hades because of air that is> invisible, another, because of wetness – Poseidon, and another, because of earth – planting trees Demeter. These [teachings] he passed on to the Stoics; the first part he considered after Plato. (Aetius 1.7.30 = fr. 15)

A tripartite division of the universe is presented here: above heaven – heaven – below heaven.

That the teachings of fr. 15 are "considered after Plato" is fairly clear. Although nowhere does Plato call the Demiurge *nous*, he comes very close to it (for instance, *Tim.* 39e),[26] so it appears that Xenocrates' first God directly corresponds to Plato's Demiurge.

As for "the soul of the all," it is the name used by Plato for the world soul (*Tim.* 41d). It can be called female because the Demiurge "fashioned inside it all that is corporeal" (36de). Also, because the world soul is a mother of all gods, it should be a mother of the star-gods as well. Therefore, it seems natural to interpret the heaven in fr. 15 as the sphere of fixed stars so that the realm of the monad-*nous* is above the sphere

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[24] Adam Drozdek, 'Xenocrates, fr. 15', *Minerva* 16 (2002–03), pp. 45–51.

[25] Richard Heinze, *Xenokrates* (Leipzig: Teubner, 1892; reprinted Hildesheim: Olms, 1965), p. 51. The definition, by the way, is used by Middle Platonists. For example, Albinus says that an idea is "an eternal paradigm of natural things," Dillon, *The Middle Platonists*, 281.

[26] In fact, there is a doxographic tradition that attributes to Plato the view that God is *nous* (Aetius 1.7.31 which is a passage that immediately follows Xenocrates' fr. 15). Cf. Krämer, *Der Ursprung der Geistmetaphysik*, p. 59; Matthias Baltes, 'Zur Theologie des Xenokrates', in R. van den Broek, T. Baarda, and J. Mansfeld (eds), *Knowledge of God in the Graeco-Roman World* (Leiden: Brill, 1988), p. 45 note 7.

(which corresponds to "the place beyond heaven" of *Phaedrus* 247c), and the realm of the dyad-world-soul is below it, that latter realm including both the supralunary and sublunary worlds.[27] In this interpretation, however, there is a departure from Plato's image because Plato's world soul covers the body of the world on the outside and all that is corporeal is inside it (34b, 36de). However, the discrepancy can be explained by accepting the *presence* of the world soul also outside the fixed stars, as in the *Timaeus*, but its *rule* is limited to the realm of the stars and what is beneath them. Although it physically is also outside the heaven, the world soul exercises no activity there.[28] It seems that this overlap of presences of God and world soul outside the heaven is not accidental. In this way, God can control the world soul and through it, rule also in the universe. In this way, the position of the monad-*nous* as the supreme divinity is enhanced. But also, it shows how Xenocrates does not overlook the fact that the Demiurge withdrew from the affairs of the world into his eternal rest and submitted the continuation of his work to the world soul and other divinities. The outer realm of the universe is the Demiurge's eternal respite; however, the Demiurge does not completely cut himself off from the world, but maintains a contact through the world soul, whose part is also in the domain of the Demiurge.

It is interesting that fr. 15 does not mention ideas, which do exist in the Xenocratean world. Ideas are important for Plato in two respects. They serve the Demiurge as models when creating the world. However, fr. 15 presumably describes the situation after fashioning the world using these eternal models was completed by the Demiurge. At that point, ideas are less important to the Demiurge. But they can be assumed to exist in the intelligible realm along with the Demiurge outside the sphere of fixed stars. They are independent entities in Plato's world and seem to remain such for Xenocrates as well. This is a more likely assumption than placing ideas in the mind of God which becomes common for the Middle Platonists.[29]

After Xenocrates

Polemon succeeded Xenocrates in 314 BC and was the head of the Academy until his death in 267. After Polemon, Crates became a scholarch for only a few years and was followed by Arcesilaus. The members and the associates of the Academy include Crantor, Philip of Opus, and Heraclides of Pontus. There is very little known

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[27] Krische, *Die theologischen Lehren der griechischen Denker*, p. 316; Heinze, *Xenokrates*, p. 75; Dillon, *The Middle Platonists*, 25–26; Baltes, 'Zur Theologie des Xenokrates', pp. 47–48.

[28] Hans J. Krämer, *Platonismus und hellenistische Philosophie* (Berlin: de Gruynter, 1971), p. 125, mentions different *Wirkungsbereiche* of the two gods, but he limits the dyad's *Wirkungsbereich* to the sublunary world alone.

[29] Krämer, *Der Ursprung der Geistmetaphysik*, ch. 1, makes a great effort to prove the validity of such an assumption; but impressive as the proof is, it is still very unconvincing; Krämer is largely followed by Jerzy A. Wojtczak, *O filozofii Ksenokratesa z Chalcedonu* (Warsaw: Wydawnictwa Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, 1980), ch. 1. A dissenting opinion is expressed by John P. Kenney, *Mystical Monotheism: a study in ancient Platonic theology* (Hanover: Brown University Press, 1991), p. 27.

about the teachings of other members of the Old Academy. Regarding Heraclides of Pontus, it is known that Diodorus considered him "the piously inclined" who saw an earthquake at Helice as a result of divine wrath (fr. 46 Wehrli).[30] An Epicurean scorns Heraclides for regarding "as divine at one time the universe, and, at another, mind (*mens*). He assigns divinity to the planets as well; he deprives God of sensation; he suggests that his shape is unchangeable and … numbers earth and sky among the gods" (Cicero, *ND* 1.34 = fr. 111). We can gather from this that God who is deprived of sensation is mind, an intelligible being who is always the same. By assigning divinity to the celestial bodies, he made no departure from Plato and, in particular, from Xenocrates. He also believed that the gods exist and are interested in human affairs (fr. 75),[31] which is the continuation of the teaching of the *Laws* x.

An important work of the Old Academy in the *Epinomis*. The dialogue is usually attributed to Philip of Opus.[32] The dialogue discusses the nature of wisdom necessary to properly govern the city of Magnesia. Like the *Laws*, the *Epinomis* is set up in the theological context. God, "who enjoys the perfection of divine nature," is the most perfect being and because his knowledge is also perfect and complete, God "is entirely occupied in thinking and knowing" (985a). What we have comes from God, and God implants in us natural capacities due to which the discovery of agriculture (975b) and understanding "what we are shown" (976c) was possible. God's gifts, such as the gift of number, come from God and not through "some good fortune" (976e). It is no accident that we are made up in a certain way and are able to do certain things. But just as our makeup is the subject of God's care, so we are not abandoned afterwards, since "the gods care for all things" (980d).

This discussion indicates that throughout the duration of the Old Academy, from Plato to Crates, theology was a focal point of deliberations. It may have been addressed directly or indirectly, but the theological spirit was ubiquitous. However, a drastic change occurs when Arcesilaus succeeds Crates and after the latter's death in 241 inaugurates the Middle Academy (DL 4.28), the Sceptical Academy. The reasons for this change are still debated. Arcesilaus was very likely under the influence of Pyrrho. The dialectic method used by Arcesilaus is the continuation of the method used before in the Old Academy with two differences. The dialectic of discussion and disputation was originally a tool for development of a positive doctrine. In Arcesilaus, the method is emancipated and becomes formal dialectic.[33] This was not a methodical scepticism as in Socrates, as a means of arriving at truth, but it was the end result. There is nothing certain, even Scepticism itself (Cicero, *De orat.* 3.18). Moreover, the competition with Stoicism with its well developed physics and ethics causes the Academy to concentrate on the dialectic. Also, under the influence of Stoicism, it becomes more materialist and the traditional Platonist metaphysics is

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30 H.B. Gottschalk, *Heraclides of Pontus* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980), pp. 94–95.

31 Ibid., pp. 94, 118–119.

32 Although, "it seems preferable not to call Philip the author of the *Epinomis*, but to leave open the possibility that it may have been written by another member of the early Academy," Leonardo Tarán, *Academica: Plato, Philip of Opus, and the pseudo-Platonic Epinomis* (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1975), p. 138.

33 Krämer, *Platonismus und hellenistische Philosophie*, p. 48.

suspended.[34] It is even possible to argue that the Academy concentrates on criticism of Stoicism alone to "overthrow the Stoic dogmatism" so that the development of positive Platonist doctrine is abandoned.[35] The Sceptic spirit is even exacerbated in the New Academy inaugurated by Carneades (SE, *PH* 1.220) who concentrated on attacks on the Stoics which almost became the reason for his existence ("if there were no Chrysippus, I would not be," DL 4.62). And Carneades argues in particular against the existence of God and the gods.[36]

The restoration of the old spirit of the Academy begins with Antiochus of Ascalon when he becomes the head of the Academy at the beginning of the first century BC. He reinvigorates the development of the positive doctrine, and, although there are differences between Plato, Antiochus and other Middle Platonists, the emphasis placed on theological issues remains the same as in the Old Academy.

[34] Ibid., pp. 53–54.

[35] Heinrich Dörrie, *Die geschichtlichen Wurzeln des Platonismus* (Stuttgart: Frommann-Holzboog, 1987), p. 432.

[36] See Adam Drozdek, 'Sceptics and a religious instinct', *Minerva* 18 (2005), pp. 93–108.

Chapter 16

The Early Lyceum

To account for the beginning of motion, Aristotle introduces the concept of the Unmoved Mover (UM). The UM is a mover that moves without being moved, being eternal, substance, and actuality (*Met.* 1072a14–16), and that moves as an intelligible and desirable being, as an object of thought, of love, and of desire. The UM's power is manifested by inducing desire, and the desire causes motion. The UM moves the first moved mover as an external and final cause. The UM is "the first principle and primary being" (*Met.* 1073a23–24), "the divine and … the first and most important principle" (1064a37–b1), the supreme deity, God. God is a separate substance that is pure form, perfect actuality, and pure activity of a pure mind that is absorbed in its own thinking from eternity to eternity. Perfection of God is expressed in his extreme transcendence: he is not in the world, but outside, not even in a place because God has no magnitude. He is also transcendent in not even knowing that the world exists because such an awareness of a less than perfect world would compromise his divine perfection. Also, "we assume the gods to be above all other things blessed and happy," therefore, only contemplation is fitting to them, and so "the activity of God, which surpasses all others in blessedness, must be contemplative" (*EN* 1178b8–9,21–22). In this way, God is the thinking eternally thinking about his own thinking.

The concept of God proposed by Aristotle differs markedly from the concept of divinity of the popular religion on the one hand, and from the concept proposed by other philosophers – and in particular, by Plato – on the other. Also, theological discussions are peripheral in Aristotle's writings, and are made in a cursory, even dismissive fashion. There are then at least two ways for Aristotle's successors to approach theological issues: either give them more weight and make them more important, or dispose of them altogether. Both of these approaches are represented in the Lyceum: the first, by an immediate successor of Aristotle at the helm of the Lyceum, Theophrastus; the second, by Theophrastus' successor, Strato.

Theophrastus

In his work *On piety*, Theophrastus proposes a classification of offerings into three categories:

> There are three reasons to offer to the gods: on account of honor, on account of gratitude, and on account of the need of the goods; so we believe it is necessary to bring them [= the gods] first fruits, just as to good men. We honor the gods either because we try to avert

> evil things and vouchsafe good things or we have been treated well or just to honor their good disposition. (Porphyry, *De abstinentia* 2.24.1)[1]

Is this classification introduced only for historical purposes by a detached scientist who does not identify himself with the effectiveness of offerings[2] or is it a classification that reflects the views of Theophrastus himself? If Theophrastus believed in the efficacy of offerings, he would espouse the view of a providential deity, which is a significant modification of theology of his teacher, Aristotle.

The fragment in which Theophrastus classifies offerings and points to his belief in the gods that are not uninterested in the affairs of the sublunary world is by no means isolated. The excerpts consistently indicate that Theophrastus seriously believes in the providential character of the gods. He states, for example, that all things belong to the gods, but the fruits belong to humans because of the effort to plant, care for, and harvest them, so no animal sacrifices should be offered (2.13.3). The gods delight in inexpensive fruit offerings (2.15.1), clean (2.19.4), and ordinary (2.20.1) rather than in expensive ones. Particularly, they delight in the purity of the offering giver, the purity of his soul (ψυχή) because "God takes greatest delight in the most divine thing in us when it is in a pure condition because it is akin [to him]."[3] That is, to the godhead, the disposition of an offering giver is of paramount importance and "just as not anything can be offered to them, so is not [an offering] by anyone equally pleasing to the gods" (2.32.2). Gods do not need offerings (2.60.4) and thus the gods are not going to be more effectively pacified by a certain type of offering, in particular – which is important for Porphyry's argument – animal offerings. In fact, an introduction of animal sacrifices was not to God's liking and thus "the divinity became angry, as Theophrastus says, and … inflicted the appropriate punishment" (2.7.3). Therefore, no animals should be used for offering.[4]

It should be clear that Theophrastus believed in the gods' interest in men's offerings. What gods? Theophrastus believed in the divinity of heaven and the stars, where the stars are called the heavenly gods and even the visible heavenly gods (οἱ φαινόμενοι οὐράνιοι θεοί, 2.5.1–2).[5] Whether Theophrastus believed in anthropomorphic gods of traditional mythology is less clear. When he frequently

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[1] Adam Drozdek, 'Theophrastus and the providential divinity', *Sileno* 31 (2005), pp. 37–48.

[2] Theophrastus' classification of offerings has "no philosophico-theoretical [significance] but only arranging historical meaning; he did not have in mind the Peripatos' honoring God, but the cult of an ordinary Greek visitor of the temple with his pure and impure motives," Jacob Bernays, *Theophrastos' Schrift über Frömmigkeit* (Berlin: Hertz, 1866; reprinted Hildesheim: Olms, 1979), pp. 104–105.

[3] 2.19.4, 2.15.3, 2.61.1–2; cf. Porphyry's reference in 2.61.4 to Plato, *Laws* 716d, 717a.

[4] This is not an expression of an indiscriminate vegetarianism since animals can be killed for flesh (2.25.4) and when they are harmful (2.22.2, 2.23.2).

[5] Cf. Dirk Obbink, 'The origin of Greek sacrifice: Theophrastus on religion and cultural history', in W.W. Fortenbaugh and R.W. Sharples (eds), *Theophrastean Studies* (New Brunswick: Transaction Books, 1988), p. 274.

mentions the gods, he may always mean the star-gods,[6] but he may mean traditional gods as well.[7]

The star-gods acknowledged by Theophrastus are not the ultimate divine reality. Higher than them is God-*nous*. *De pietate* points in this direction rather vaguely. Soul is pronounced to be most divine, but also "the mind is something better and more divine" than emotions and appetites.[8] Moreover, pure mind and impassible soul are the best offerings. The soul is, as it were, indirectly divine: it is divine because it is a seat of the mind. This was Aristotle's opinion, who somewhat hesitatingly stated that the mind which is in the soul is whereby the soul thinks and judges (*De anima* 429a22–23); the mind "seems to be an independent substance placed in us and it is subject of incorruption" (408b18–19).

The mind "seems to be ungenerated if indeed it is also incorruptible" (Themistius, *In De anima* 108.26), that is, mind is eternal[9] and as such, substantial.[10] This offers a prospect of immortality, which Theophrastus seems to mention.

Most explicitly God and mind are put on the same plane in Theophrastus' argument that there are beings that can be self-moved, and he gives as examples "mind itself and God" (*Met.* 7b22–23). This statement does not mean that the nature of God and the nature of mind are different. Each human being is endowed with mind, and so there is a multiplicity of minds. But all these human minds stem from one source, and this source is mind *par excellence*, God. All human minds are agent–patient unions and this fact is stressed by putting God and mind itself side by side.[11] In this way, we reach the point when Theophrastean discussion of religion has to be confronted with the problem of the UM.

In his *Metaphysics*, Theophrastus states that the principle of all things, on account of which all things exist and persist, is divine (4b15–16).[12] The principle seems to exercise an action on the rest of reality. Aristotle's UM can be said to exercise such an action, at best, unwittingly although it is arguable that things in the Aristotelian

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[6] A confirmation of this view can be seen in Theophrastus' statement that temples always maintain "undying fire," burning because fire is "most similar to them," the gods (2.5.2).

[7] Pötscher is convinced that Theophrastus believed in the traditional gods, but these gods are "the lowest manifestation form of the godhead," Walter Pötscher, *Strukturprobleme der aristotelischen und theophrastischen Gottesvorstellung* (Leiden: Brill, 1970), p. 120, also pp. 101, 103.

[8] Simplicius, *In Phys.* 965.4; cf. Aristotle, *De anima* 408b29.

[9] "What is ungenerated is eternal and what is incorruptible is eternal," says Aristotle, *De caelo* 282a33–282b1.

[10] "How could it be eternal if it were not substantial," asks rhetorically Edmond Barbotin, *La théorie aristotélicienne de l'intellect d'après Théophraste* (Louvain: Publications Universitaires, 1954), p. 167.

[11] Only in this sense one can agree that "association of God with mind does not imply an identification of the two," as stated by Marlein van Raalte, 'Notes', in Theophrastus, *Metaphysics* (Leiden: Brill, 1993), p. 349.

[12] "Divine is the principle of all, by virtue of which things both are and endure" (4b13–16). This may be an indication of the first principle's transcendent nature, van Raalte, 'Notes', p. 195.

universe exists thanks to the UM. Such a claim can be made for Plato's Demiurge. The UM is the principle of motion. To be sure, Theophrastus' principle is also the cause of motion (4b21–22). Furthermore, being itself unmoved, the principle exercises its causality by becoming an object of desire (5a2–3), exactly as required by Aristotle (*Met.* 1072a21–27).

Why is it that the heavenly bodies that have a natural desire for the UM "do not pursue rest but motion" (5a23–25; 7b23–8a2)? Circular motion is "the first kind of spatial motion" and it is the work of the UM (*Met.* 1072b8–9; 1073a26–34). However, even considering the fact that circular motion is continuous and no starting point can be singled out, and thus the moving body "is in a sense (πως) at rest as well as in motion" (*Phys.* 265b7–8), this motion is only in a sense being at rest and thus not fully at rest like the UM. Also, because the rotational motion depends on the desire of the first heaven (FH), it appears to be accidental, and it is possible to envision the FH as not rotating: every time the FH stops desiring, the rotation would also stop. To prevent such a possibility from happening, rotation should be considered the essential attribute of the FH, which would require no desire, or desire could be made an essential feature of the FH (6a5–10). In fact, the motion might be an essential attribute of each heavenly body, even "a sort of life of the universe"; that is, there is no need for an external motive cause (10a9–21). If motion stems from its essence, there is little use for the UM; if desire is considered an essential attribute of the FH, it would mean that the soul of the FH is self-moved, which gives, at best, a secondary status to the UM or even renders it superfluous. Motion of the soul thus does not presuppose an existence of an outside mover. Proclus states that according to Theophrastus, "the soul is the source of motion without postulating anything else before it" and the heavens are animate and divine and as such they possess a soul (*In Tim.* 35a, 122.10–17 Diehl).

The first principle, says Theophrastus, is the best being and only the best should be expected of it because "the first and the most divine wishes everything that is best" (6a1–2). In this, the Theophrastean most divine first principle rather resembles Plato's Demiurge who wishes everything to be good and as much as possible like himself (*Tim.* 29e, 30a).

For Theophrastus, God is not an addition to the world which accounts for the existence of motion. God is an author and participant. When explaining an apparently erratic occurrence of natural phenomena, such as hurricanes or thunderbolts, Theophrastus says

> neither the thunderbolt nor anything that has been mentioned has its origin in God. For it is not correct (to say) that God should be the cause of disorder in the world; nay, (He is) the cause of its arrangement and order. And that is why we ascribe its arrangement and order to God … and the disorder of the world to the nature of the world. (*Meteorology* [14].14–17)[13]

[13] This is an English translation of the Arabic version of *Meteorology* provided by Hans Daiber, 'The *Meteorology* of Theophrastus in Syriac and Arabic translation', in William W. Fortenbaugh and Dimitri Gutas (eds), *Theophrastus* (New Brunswick: Transaction Books, 1992), p. 270. The importance of the theological fragment of *Meteorology* is stressed by Jaap Mansfeld, 'A Theophrastean excursus on God and nature and its aftermath in

It is unclear whether Theophrastus subscribes to the Aristotelian view of the eternity of the world or to the view, in the spirit of the *Timaeus*, that the world was created from pre-existing matter. In either case, God is considered the author of the orderliness of the world. God, however, is not omnipotent – there is something "that diminishes divine power," which is something that happens "without any order" ([14].27–28)[14] – and he has to do his best with recalcitrant matter to have the universe maximally ordered. But because of the nature of the world and the nature of its material and also the eternal forces, the observed order is less than perfect. The permanent order of the world as a whole exists as much as it is infused by God. The Aristotelian purposefulness of nature becomes the purposefulness of God, and an oft-repeated statement that nature does nothing in vain could be turned into the statement that God does nothing in vain; nature, on the other hand, can.[15] It is God who has given all the things in the world for our use (Porphyry, *De abstinentia* 2.12.3) and in that sense "he is the ultimate owner."[16] Through the introduction of the providential aspect in his theology, Theophrastus departs from Aristotle and makes theology as important as it was for Plato. The providence of Theophrastean God explains the order in the universe. It remains for men to express gratitude for this order by appropriate offerings and pure soul. Religion is restored to its authentic dimension and theology acquires true pre-eminence that is only verbally declared by Aristotle. God becomes a central being in the Theophrastean universe, not reduced merely to the role of an explanatory postulate.[17]

To what extent does Theophrastus depart from the views of Aristotle? The departure can already be seen in the concept of the highest divinity. Another difference is in attributing to God efficient causality.

With a charitable interpretation of passages such as the army general metaphor presented by Aristotle, one can agree that "Aristotle believed in some kind of a

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Hellenistic thought', *Phronesis* 37 (1992), pp. 314–335, and by André Laks and Glenn W. Most, 'Notes complémentaires', in Théophraste, *Métaphysique* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1993), p. 87 note 61. Cf. *Met.* 11b7–12.

[14] See also Mansfeld, 'A Theophrastean excursus on God and nature and its aftermath in Hellenistic thought', p. 323.

[15] The problem of limitations of the teleological outlook in Theophrastus is discussed by James G. Lennox, 'Theophrastus on the limits of teleology', in William W. Fortenbaugh (ed.), *Theophrastus of Eresus* (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 1985), pp. 143–163, and Luciana Repici, 'Limits of teleology in Theophrastus' Metaphysics?', *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie* 72 (1990), pp. 182–213, with practically no references made to theology. Theophrastus rejects the idea of all-encompassing teleology, stating that "with regard to the view that all things are for the sake of an end and nothing is in vain, the assignation of ends is in general not easy, as it is usually stated to be" (*Met.* 10a22), but he does not reject teleology altogether as claimed by Felix Grayeff, *Aristotle and His School; an inquiry into the history of the Peripatos with a commentary on Metaphysics Z, H, Λ and Θ* (London: Duckworth, 1974), p. 176.

[16] Pötscher, *Strukturprobleme*, p. 101.

[17] For this reason, it may not be too surprising to read that we can find in Theophrastus "the outlines of the Christian theology," A.M. Festugière, 'Le sens des apories métaphysiques de Théophraste', *Revue Neo-scholastique de Philosophie* 33 (1931), p. 49.

providence over the world by the intelligent and wise will of the First Mover,"[18] but such interpretation is not the only one that is possible, particularly in the context of *Metaphysics* 12 where the metaphor is given. However, such passages may have been an inspiration for Theophrastus to develop his own view of God's providence that becomes God's unambiguous attribute. It is also possible that Aristotle stressed God's providence in his early writing to end with final causality as the only causality befitting God.[19]

It is also true that "the first cause of Aristotle is an intelligence without force, the god of Plato is an intelligent force."[20] Theophrastus sides, in that respect, with Plato. He restores the grandeur of God, who is integrated with the world, by making him aware of its existence and its needs. Aristotelian God as a postulate of the theoretical reason becomes Theophrastean God, not only and not merely a postulate of theoretical reason, but a central being that plays a pivotal role in lives of individual people and societies. Metaphysically and theologically speaking, Theophrastean God is moved from the sidelines of the universe to its center, from deistic deity to providential God. In this endeavor, Theophrastus turns into positive philosophy remarks and allusions scattered in the writings of Aristotle that can be interpreted as an expression of the view of providential God who can exercise efficient causality. The Platonic perspective, which barely appears in Aristotle, becomes pre-eminent in Theophrastus.

The theological direction of the Lyceum changes drastically with Strato, but the way is prepared by Theophrastus' contemporaries, Aristoxenus and Dicaearchus.

After Theophrastus

Aristoxenus, who studied with the Pythagoreans before coming to the Lyceum, distinguished himself so far that he was chosen to succeed Aristotle as scholarch. According to Cicero, "Aristoxenus, the musician and philosopher, said that the soul is a sort of tension of the body itself, like what is called *harmonia* in singing and lyre-playing; in such a way, various motions arise from the whole nature and shape of the body, comparable to the sounds of music" (*Tusc.* 1.19 = fr. 120a). The statement ties the soul very closely to the body, not making it necessarily an epiphenomenon. The soul can be considered an active force that determines the types and arrangements of the parts and the motions of the body. This would be an interpretation of the soul in the spirit of Plato. However, the soul is considered mortal by Aristoxenus (1.24 = fr. 119). The existence of the mind (*animus*) is expressly denied by Aristoxenus and Dicaearchus (1.51 = Dicaearchus fr. 8e). The mind was a specifically human part of the soul, separable from the soul, and thus a claim of immortality can be made within Aristotlelian eschatology. No such claim is possible for Aristoxenus

[18] Francis X. Meehan, *Efficient Causality in Aristotle and St. Thomas* (Washington: The Catholic University of America Press, 1940), p. 89.

[19] Early works are lost, but from what is known about them, "in Aristotle's philosophical theology more than one phase should be distinguished," A.P. Bos, *Providentia divina. The theme of divine pronoia in Plato and Aristotle* (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1976), p. 7.

[20] Jules Simon, *Études sur la théodicée de Platon et d'Aristote* (Paris: Joubert, 1840), p. 31.

and Dicaearchus, and thus a possibility of nonepiphenomenalist understanding of Aristoxenus' pronouncement concerning the soul is rather difficult.[21]

The view of the soul identification with *harmonia* is also attributed to Aristotle's immediate pupil, Dicaearchus.[22] However, it is also reported that according to Dicaearchus there is no *dianoia* "beyond the body in a certain state" (SE 7.349 = fr. 8a); "it is not possible for the soul to exist in any way."[23] The reason for this view was also preserved. Aristotle expressly stated that mental activities involve the man as a whole, but, still, pain or thinking originate in the soul (*De anima* 408b5–15). It is said that Dicaearchus rejected the existence of the soul because the entire organism is responsible for mental activities.[24] In this way, no involvement of the soul in mental activities is considered necessary. The apparent contradiction between these reports can be avoided by stating that because only late sources ascribe to Dicaearchus the souls-as-*harmonia* view, it should be rejected as a mistaken ascription.[25] However, a more probable way of reconciling the differences is by seeing in the rejection of the soul a weak rejection: the soul cannot exist by itself in separation from the body.[26] In this way, the soul would just simply be, with no role to play in the motions of the body because it cannot exercise any causative influence on it, whereby Dicaearchus can be seen as "candidly embracing the inefficacy of the mental."[27] This is a direct opposition to Aristotle's rejection of the view of the soul as *harmonia* because, among other things, the soul cannot be the efficient cause of motion (*De anima* 1.4). But when the soul becomes inefficacious, it also becomes redundant and this is very close to the complete rejection of the soul. Moreover, this approach, in conjunction with the Theophrastus' questioning the position of the UM, opens an avenue toward questioning the need for the UM at all. Which leads us to the views of Strato.[28]

Strato, the third head of the Lyceum, is commonly called by the doxographers the physicist, or rather a philosopher of nature (for example, Polybius 12.25c.3 = fr. 16; DL 5.58 = fr. 1). And, in fact, the preserved testimonies seem to confirm his interest primarily in natural philosophy to the exclusion of other fields.

All explanation of natural events should be made in terms of natural causes, in particular, material and efficient causes. Strato "denies that he makes use of activity of the gods for constructing the world. He teaches that whatever things exist, they are the result of natural causes," unlike Democritus who uses atoms, "but he himself, reviewing the various departments of the world one by one, teaches that whatever

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21 Hans B. Gottschalk, 'Soul as *harmonia*', *Phronesis* 16 (1971), p. 183.

22 Pseudo-Plutarch, *Plac*. 898c 4.2.5 = fr. 12a, Stobaeus 1.49.1a = fr. 12b; Theodoret 5.18 = fr. 12c has 'Clearchus' and Nemesius, *De nat. hom.* 2.11 = fr. 11 has 'Deinarchus,' and it is conjectured that the preserved names are corruptions of 'Dicaearchus.'

23 Iamblichus, *ap*. Stobaeus 1.49.32 = fr. 8k; Simplicius, *In Cat.* 216.12–15 = fr. 8g.

24 Atticus the Platonist 7.9–10, *ap*. Eusebius, *Praep*. 15.9.10 = fr. 8i.

25 Gottschalk, 'Soul as *harmonia*', pp. 186–187.

26 Robert W. Sharples, 'Dicaearchus on the soul and on divination', in William W. Fortenbaugh and Eckart Schütrumpf (eds), *Dicaearchus of Messana: text, translation, and discussion* (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 2001), pp. 151, 163; Victor Caston, 'Dicaearchus' philosophy of mind', in the same volume, p. 178.

27 Caston, 'Dicaearchus' philosophy of mind', pp. 182, 185.

28 Adam Drozdek, 'Strato's irreligion', *Maia* 56 (2004), pp. 285–292.

either is or comes into being is or has been made by natural forces of gravitation and motion" (Cicero, *Acad.* 2.121 = fr. 32). According to Strato, "the cosmos is not a living being and that [which happens] by nature (κατὰ φύσιν) follows what [happens] by chance (κατὰ τύχην); for the spontaneous (τὸ ὐτόματον) yields an ἀρχή and so every one of physical processes is brought to pass" (Plutarch, *Adv. Col.* 1115b = fr. 35).

When Strato says that that which happens by nature follows what happens by chance, he seems to intentionally consider nature as secondary to chance in eradicating any traces of the final cause from nature.[29] Because, by definition, final causality is absent in chance, whatever is derived from chance is also devoid of this type of causality. Efficient causality is still retained, but a providential element is removed from natural events. Spontaneity, which includes chance, is the principle and the beginning, the *arche*, of all natural phenomena, which is true on both the micro and macro scale.[30] This reliance on spontaneity does not exclude the existence of regularity in nature. Natural laws still exist; nature does not behave randomly. Spontaneity of nature just means that there is no overseeing intelligence, no providential force, and for this reason Lactantius includes Strato among those "who are unwilling [to hold that] the world was made by divine providence" (*De ira Dei* 10.1 = fr. 34).[31]

According to fr. 35, Strato also states that the cosmos is not a living being, and so there is no world soul. Strato proposes that "all divine power lies in nature, which bears within it the causes of birth, growth, and diminution, which lacks all sensation and shape" (Cicero, *De nat. deor.* 1.35 = fr. 33). Strato transferred to nature all divine powers, but because nature is lifeless and the laws of nature derived from spontaneity, not from intelligent design, the phrase that "all divine power lies in nature" is possibly Cicero's, and if it is Strato's, it can only mean that whatever was ascribed by mythology and other philosophers to the work of a divinity, is really the result of alienating natural forces from nature; divine powers are, in fact, powers of nature. Therefore, by transferring to nature all divine powers, Strato did not identify God with nature,

[29] "Strato's views on a number of apparently disparate topics may in fact arise from a dissatisfaction with Aristotle's use of teleological explanation," Sylvia A. Berryman, 'Rethinking Aristotelian Teleology: the natural philosophy of Strato of Lampsacus', Ph.D. dissertation (University of Texas at Austin, 1996), p. 128.

[30] Therefore, it is unjustified to limit Strato's position expressed in fr. 35 to the beginning of the world only, as suggested by August B. Krische, *Die theologischen Lehren der griechischen Denker* (Göttingen: Dieterichsche Buchhandlung, 1840), p. 354; G. Rodier, *La physique de Straton de Lampsaque* (Paris: Alcan, 1890), p. 63 note 1, p. 85; and Matthias Gatzemeier, *Die Naturphilosophie des Straton von Lampsakos* (Meisenheim/G.: Hain, 1970), pp. 106–107, 109.

[31] Strato "took the term chance in the same sense as Democritus to designate that which is not derived from final cause, and not the absence of a natural cause," Rodier, *La Physique de Straton de Lampsaque*, p. 55. By his use of chance, "Strato stresses the unfolding of natural processes unaided," Berryman, 'Rethinking Aristotelian teleology', p. 147.

thereby becoming a pantheist[32] or the first forerunner of Spinoza.[33] As far as the extant fragments allow us to say, he dismissed the theological questions, and in this he could be seen as a forerunner of positivism,[34] in particular, of physicalism of the Vienna circle. He did not equate God and nature, but rather he "put in place of a divine being an impersonal natural force that works with necessity."[35] There remains only nature with its laws that does not admit of any supernatural being.

After Strato the Lyceum fell into decline. Following his death in 268 BC, very few written works were produced by the Lyceum and practically nothing original. The work was fragmented, lacking the broad scope of Aristotle's work. In particular, Strato's successor, Lyco, produced very little during his 44 years of scholarchate and his "style was pretentious, his matter is barren" (Cicero, *De fin.* 5.13). Not all names of Lyco's successors are even known, and the ones that are known (Ariston of Keos, Critolaus, Diodorus of Tyre) are the names of scholarchs who contributed nothing original to philosophy and science and were interested in only very few areas.[36] The Lyceum ceased to exist as an institution at the time of Sulla's sack of Athens in 86 BC. Sulla brought to Rome the writings of Aristotle and Theophrastus.[37] Andronicus of Rhodes produced a collection, which is the basis of the arrangement of the *corpus Aristotelicum* that exists today. This time marks a measure of renewed interest in the Aristotelian philosophy. However, whereas the earlier Peripatetics continued Aristotle's works, now the Peripatetics of the first and second centuries AD almost exclusively explain and defend Aristotle's work (Alexander of Aphrodisias).

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[32] As claimed by Minucius Felix, *Octavius* 19.8 (= fr. 38); Tertullian, *Adv. Marc.* 1.13 (= fr. 39; this "clearly erroneous [view] is probably merely a mistake based on a too rapid reading of Seneca," as argued by Robert M. Grant, 'Two notes on Tertullian', *Vigiliae Christianae* 5 (1951), 114); Wilhelm Windelband, *History of Ancient Philosophy* (New York: Dover, 1956 [1893]), 299; Eduard Zeller, *Aristotle and the Earlier Peripatetics* (New York: Longmans, 1897), vol. 2, pp. 396, 456; Anders B. Drachmann, *Atheism in Pagan Antiquity* (London: Gyldendal, 1922), p. 87; Strato's "sheer pantheism" is mentioned by John M. Robertson, *A Short History of Freethought Ancient and Modern* (London: Watts, 1906), vol. 1, p. 180.

[33] As already claimed by Jean-François Buddeus (1701), Gatzemeier, *Die Naturphilosophie des Straton von Lampsakos*, p. 9; Leibniz also speaks about "modern Stratonists, that is, Spinozists," *Theodicy* 188.

[34] Cf. Rodier, *La Physique de Straton de Lampsaque*, p. 115. As for Spinoza, the doctrine of the Stoics was an adumbration of Spinozism.

[35] Gustav Kafka and Hans Eibl, *Der Ausklang der antiken Philosophie und das Erwachen einer neuen Zeit* (Munich: Reinhardt, 1928), p. 26; Gatzemeier, *Die Naturphilosophie des Straton von Lampsakos*, p. 108. In fact, Maximus Tyrius also expresses this sentiment when he says that even the atheist has a notion of God "even if he puts nature in place [of God], like Strato" (11.5 = fr. 36).

[36] John P. Lynch, *Aristotle's School* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972), ch. 5.

[37] Ibid., pp. 161–162, 193, 198, 202.

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Chapter 17

Early Cynics

Diogenes of Sinope

Diogenes arrived in Athens after his involvement in counterfeiting money in Sinope. In Athens, he attached himself to Antisthenes[1] although this fact is open to challenge since it appears that Diogenes arrived at Athens after Antisthenes' death.[2] Diogenes advocated and apparently followed a life of extreme minimalism, philosophically justifying that one should follow nature, not human conventions, in a proper conduct of life. This included not only eating when hungry and wearing cloth for protection, not for show, but also allowing for physiology to have an upper hand at any time and place. Diogenes' Cynicism is primarily a lifestyle defying established conventions; very little is offered by way of theoretical justification. Generally, theorizing was disdained by the Cynics, and almost nothing can be found in the area of philosophical pronouncements. Theology does not fare any better. Only very few statements concerning religious practices can be found. Some anecdotes about Diogenes can be used to glean his attitude toward religion and theology.

First, it seems to be obvious that Diogenes did not have a very positive view about the traditional gods. "Diogenes said that the prosperity and success of the wicked disprove all of force and power of the gods" (Cicero, *ND* 3.88). He also said that "Harpalus, who in his time was regarded as a successful robber, was a testimony against the gods because he lived in [good] fortune for so long" (Cicero, *ND* 3.83). The gods, if they exist at all and if they are benefactors of humanity, as advocated by Socrates, show little of their beneficence in the world because of their powerlessness. The superhuman power of the gods is but a myth. For this reason, he ridiculed votive offerings in Samothrace by saying that there would be many more such offerings if they were made not only by those who survived sea storms, but also by those who perished at the sea (DL 6.59). Obviously, to him, the gods were not very effective in protecting men at sea.

Diogenes excoriated the religious practices of the day. He ridiculed the initiation rites as unjust: those initiated into the Mysteries supposedly have special privileges in Hades, but how is it that the virtuous who are not initiated would lie in mire

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[1] DL 6.21; Jean-Pierre Larre, *Diogène ou la science du bonheur* (Hélette: Harriet, 1997), pp. 41, 117, 140.

[2] Donald R. Dudley, *A History of Cynicism from Diogenes to the 6th Century A.D.* (Cambridge, 1937; reprinted New York: Gordon Press, 1974), p. 23; Farrand Sayre, *The Greek Cynics* (Baltimore: Furst, 1948, p. 56); H.D. Rankin, *Antisthenes Sokratikos* (Amsterdam: Hakkert, 1986), 182; A.A. Long, 'The Socratic tradition: Diogenes, Crates, and Hellenistic ethics', in R.B. Branham and M.-O. Goulet-Cazé (eds), *The Cynics* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), p. 45.

and the wicked who are initiated would have a life of bliss after death? (DL 6.39; cf. criticism of Plato, *Rep.* 364b–365c). This, however, may not necessarily be an argument against the reality of the initiation. Diogenes presumably rejects this particular initiation because it does not square well with his (and not only his) sense of justice. But much more would be required to show that the religious views behind the initiation are wrong. Such a theological argument Diogenes does not provide.

Diogenes criticized temple guards for thievery (DL 6.45), but at the same time, he did not see anything wrong in stealing from temples (DL 6.73); that is, temples are not special sacred places to be held in a particular reverence. On the other hand, stealing from the temple can be defended by a seemingly theological reasoning: "all things belong to the gods; the wise are friends of the gods, and friends own everything in common; therefore, all things belong to the wise" (DL 6.37, 72). So, it may appear that if there is any place from which stealing is allowable, it would be a temple, a place consecrated to the gods because it more than anything else belongs to them, and thus, at least the wise, being gods' friends, can freely help themselves in temples. The reasoning proposed here is more fanciful than expressing Diogenes' theological convictions. The idea that the wise are friends of the gods appeared in the Socratic circle and was frequently used then.[3] Diogenes just uses a popular idea to promote his right to own anything, the right that belongs to the wise, which Diogenes certainly considered himself to be. In fact, it is believed that the syllogism offered by Diogenes "may have influenced the later Cynics in the thefts and robberies attributed to them."[4]

"When Diogenes was asked what went on in heaven, he said: 'I have never been there'"; also, "when he was asked if the gods exist, he replied, 'Do the gods exist? I do not know, but I know that it is expedient that they should'" (Tertullian, *Ad nationes* 2.2),[5] which is an expression of agnosticism rather than atheism. Another time, to the same question, whether he believes in the existence of gods, he answered to one Lysias, "How could I – he said – not believe, when I know that the gods hate you" (DL 6.42). The quip is attributed also to Theodorus the atheist (DL 2.102). The fact of attributing this answer to an atheist and to Diogenes is considered significant, presumably implying that Diogenes shares the views of Theodorus.[6] This very well may be, but this is far from sufficient to draw any conclusions about the religious views of Diogenes (and Theodorus). Diogenes' answer is rather a wise crack meant to denigrate Lysias that to express Diogenes' theological views.

Except for direct religious criticism, Diogenes makes some apparently pious statements; however, such statements may be, in reality, very far from piety. Once he said to a woman who knelt before the gods (in a temple?) and prayed in an ungraceful position that everything is full of gods and a god can be behind her, so she should watch out (DL 6.37). However, the statement that everything is full of gods would be more to the point if the woman behaved ungracefully anywhere else

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[3] Plato, *Symp.* 193b, *Rep.* 621c, *Tim.* 53d, Laws 716d; Xenophon, *Symp.* 4.48; Erik Peterson, 'Der Gottesfreund', *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte* 42 (1923), pp. 162–164.

[4] Sayre, *The Greek Cynics*, p. 57.

[5] A more extreme version of this statement can be found in a pronouncement penned by Voltaire, "If there were no God, it would be necessary to invent Him."

[6] Marek Winiarczyk, 'Diagoras von Melos und Diogenes von Sinope', *Eos* 64 (1976), p. 182.

but before the gods. It is understood that when praying before the gods, the gods are present, so Diogenes' argument is at least redundant. However, the argument was supposed to liberate the woman from superstition. What superstition? The fact that the ungraceful position of the woman does not lead to visible wrath of the gods indicates that everything is not full of gods, and in particular, in the place where people pray to them. And so, the ungraceful position really does not matter; the gods do not care or are not present or maybe do not exist at all. Although the woman's offence is not as drastic as Harpalus' robberies, the silence of heaven in the face of her behavior is just as good an indication of whether the gods exist.

The anecdote also shows an ironic, even mocking context in which the statement is made that everything is full of gods. This statement attributed to Thales must have been known well enough in Diogenes' times to be quoted by Aristotle (*De anima* 411a8 = 11A22); therefore, it can hardly be used as an expression of the theological convictions of Diogenes. The context rather indicates that everything is not quite full of gods; therefore, it is unjustified, based on this statement, to attribute to Diogenes "a dark, rather crude pantheism"[7] or any type of pantheism, for that matter.

When he says that the gods gave men an easy life, but men make it complicated (DL 6.44), the emphasis is on men's predilection for seeking things that are more elaborate (culinary art) and enjoyable (perfumes), but which really make life more complicated and are unnecessary. The reference to the gods is hardly a theological statement here. It is a conventional phrase that signifies no theological commitment. At best, the reference can be considered "a poetic expression of his admiration of the force and admirable order of nature."[8]

Good people are images of the gods (DL 6.51). Also, bad people are slaves of their lusts. Therefore, the goodness of good men lies in their freedom from following their lusts. Having such a freedom may be a lifelong enterprise, and the goal of each man should be to strive for it by imitating – Diogenes would say – the life of a Cynic. Gods presumably already have this freedom. They are not driven by desires and lusts; they simply have no lusts. It appears that such freedom, not immortality, is the essence of divinity. The demigod Hercules was a paragon of conduct for Diogenes since he, like Hercules, treasured freedom above all (DL 6.71). Good people can become at best images of the gods because it does not appear to be possible to completely eradicate lusts. If gods exist at all, they are rather powerless beings who are detached from the affairs of the world, very much like Epicurean gods living somewhere in the *intermundia*. They may not be even immortal, like the gods of the Stoics. They are completely free entities, perfect Cynics.

It is just possible that Diogenes believed in the existence of the gods, but these were gods having little to do with lives of people, unable to influence – and very likely disinterested in – these lives. They were ego-oriented, concerned with themselves and their freedom. In a word, their primary, if not only, role in the world was to serve as models for the Cynics. The existence of the gods was not motivated by theological

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[7] Carl W. Goettling, 'Diogenes der Cyniker oder die Philosophie des griechischen Proletariats', in his *Gesammelte Abhandlungen* (Halle, 1851), vol. 1, p. 272.

[8] This interpretation is proposed by Charles Chappuis, *Antisthène* (Paris: Durand, 1854), p. 121.

reasons but by Cynic ethics. By allowing their existence, Diogenes makes a bow to traditional religion, but he primarily reinforces his ethical teaching. Therefore, it is justified to say that the Cynics' goal is freedom from emotion "and this is equivalent to becoming a god" (Julian, *Or.* 6.192a). Diogenes' "denunciation of religion notwithstanding, he was not averse to entertaining the possibility of the existence of other dimensions of reality aside from the tangible domain of the physical world."[9] But the other dimensions are assumed to exist to serve the purposes of the Cynic doctrine and Cynic lifestyle. Other than that, such dimensions should be discarded like anything else that hampers the simplicity of the Cynic life.

When discussing the religious views of Diogenes, we need to mention an oracle about his call to the Cynic life. Diogenes asked Pythia, "What should I do to gain greatest reputation," to which the answer is "Adulterate the currency" (DL 6.20). Whether understood literally as to deface actual currency or symbolically as the life of cultural nonconformism, this is not what "Apollo had ordered him to do."[10] This was not an order, but an answer to a question. The adulteration was – according to the oracle – a way to gain fame, not an order to proceed in this way. He did not have to do this; he was not obligated by presumed higher power to adulterate the currency, but if he wanted fame, the oracular advice was to do just that.

The oracle's pronouncement about Diogenes appears late, in the second century AD (Maximus of Tyre, *Diss.* 36) and is commonly considered to be a fabrication that imitates the oracle about Socrates.[11] This is very likely, but it is not impossible that Diogenes might have gone to Delphi to ask for advice. This was done in the days before he became a Cynic and was a manifestation of some piety. However, this type of piety is irreconcilable with his later pronouncements, and, if it existed at all, his conventional piety dissipated in his Cynic days. However, it is important to stress the motivation for his inquiry at Delphi: it was a desire to become famous. Fame was what was primarily on his mind, no matter what the reason for fame. If it was through a life of offending public sensitivities – and urinating in public was the least of such offences (DL 4.46, 56) – Diogenes did not shrink from it. If it was through mocking rites and cult, Diogenes did not hesitate. In this way, Diogenes could claim that irreligious behavior had religious justification, namely the oracle.

Although Antisthenes is considered to be the first Cynic, little seems to justify that. Antisthenes is as much a Cynic as Socrates because they both made some pronouncements which can be interpreted in the Cynic way. The critical element in Socrates, and to a large extent in Antisthenes, namely theology, is completely missing from Diogenes' views. Diogenes exemplifies a certain extreme lifestyle – a life of freedom from everything, including religious constraints. Diogenes' life itself is a justification of its validity. This is a life of anti-intellectualism and of deliberate

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[9] Luis E. Navia, *Diogenes of Sinope: the man in the tub* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1998), p. 59.

[10] Ibid., p. 11.

[11] Olof Gigon, 'Antike Erzählungen über die Berufung zur Philosophie', *Museum Helveticum* 3 (1946), p. 8; Heinrich Niehues-Pröbsting, *Der Kynismus des Diogenes und der Begriff des Zynismus* (Frankfurt: Fink, 1979), p. 78; see also, Larre, *Diogène ou la science du bonheur*, pp. 93, 141; Navia, *Diogenes of Sinope*, p. 17.

neglect of conventions, including the rules of religious conduct. Minimalist living was the way to happiness and fulfillment.

There is no justification for the view that Diogenes "was a monotheist like Antisthenes and probably with the pantheistic tendency. His religion, natural and reasonable, saw God everywhere and not only in the temples with the idols."[12] It is possible that Diogenes believed in the existence of the gods, but these gods were powerless and distant and for all practical purposes nonexistent.

Crates

Crates of Thebes was a generation younger than Diogenes. He was much less restrictive about his lifestyle than Diogenes. However, like Diogenes, he strived for freedom and a happy life, and freedom was to be found through poverty. He abandoned the life of a rich man and moved to Athens. His attitude toward religion seems to have been quite similar to Diogenes'. In one elegy, of which eleven lines are preserved, he says (Julian *Or.* 6.199d–200a, 7.213b–d):

> Glorious children of Mnemosyne and Olympian Zeus,
> Muses of Pieria, listen to my prayer:
> Give me always food for my belly which always
> made my life simple and free from slavery.
> Make me useful rather than sweet to my friends;
> I don't want to amass glorious goods, of a beetle
> seeking wealth and riches of an ant,
> but [I desire] to possess justice and to collect riches
> that are easily carried, easily acquired, valuable for virtue.
> If I may attain these, I will worship Hermes and the pure Muses,
> not with costly offerings, but with pious virtues.

Emperor Julian twice quotes the elegy as an example of exemplary Cynic piety and veneration to the gods (*Or.* 213a). However, Julian himself recognizes it as lighter, more playful verses (τὰ παιγνία, 199d). By itself, the elegy may be considered an expression of conventional piety. However, it appears to be a parody of a long prayer of Solon (fr. 13, Bergk). The first two lines of verse are literal quotation from Solon. Then, in the prayer itself, Solon's "grant me prosperity from the blessed gods and from all men good and lasting reputation" (ll. 3–4) is replaced by the desire to have a constant influx of food; Solon's "that I am sweet to my friends, bitter to my enemies" (l. 5) is replaced by a wish to be useful, not sweet, to friends, never mind enemies; Solon's "I desire to have goods, but possess [them] unjustly – that I don't want: always afterwards goes justice" (ll. 7–8) is replaced with the wish to have justice and easily gained wealth.[13] The values expressed by Crates are Cynic: freedom and having only few possessions. The parody is in expressing these values in the form of a prayer that alludes to a prayer of a known personality. Solon's prayer expresses conventional values, which were the primary target of Cynic attacks.

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[12] Larre, *Diogène ou la science du bonheur*, p. 145.

[13] Cf. Long, 'The Socratic tradition', p. 43.

By using that prayer and replacing conventional values with Cynic values, Crates seems to indirectly criticize the gods and prayer because he asks for things that are contradictory to what Solon's prayer contains. This, in a way, voids both prayers as prayers because the gods cannot do two contradictory things at the same time, and, therefore, in the spirit of Diogenes, Crates may say that the gods will listen to no prayers and will not be of any help.

Quoting Solon could be a sign of respect and sincerity rather than of parody. However, the parody of Solon's prayer is not an isolated case in Crates' poetry. He parodies Homer several times (DL 6.85 = fr. 6 Diehl; 6.90; 2.118; Plutarch, *De vitando* 830c), the legend of Theseus (DL 2.126), and part of an inscription reported by Strabo (14.5.9) to be on the tomb of Sardanapal (DL 6.86). Crates used, adopted, modified, and even distorted traditional and mythological themes to express Cynic views. Tradition to him is a convenient springboard for nontraditional views. Even if Crates' views were not expounded in detail, an expression of these views is found in the fact of an irreverent treatment of traditional themes.[14]

Bion

Bion arrived at Athens after the death of Diogenes and tried different schools. Many of his views, however, are characteristic of the Cynics.

Bion's statements about religious matters are largely critical or even mocking. He constantly attacked diviners (DL 2.135 = F32),[15] and, as was frequently done by Greek writers, he criticized superstition (Plutarch, *De superstitione* 168d = F30, probably also Clement, *Strom.* 7.24.5 = F31A). Bion caustically censured traditional religion. He asked rhetorically, "How can men pray to Zeus for good children when he himself could not procure them for himself" (Clement, *Protrep.* 4.56.1 = F29). Prayer is a futile exercise and thus should be abandoned. In this, like Diogenes, Bion expresses his belief about the powerlessness of the gods, but not about their existence.

According to one testimony, "When Crates asked him (Stilpo) whether the gods are pleased with kneeling and prayers, they say he replied, 'don't ask about it, silly, on the street, but in private.' The same [is said] about Bion, [who,] when asked whether there are gods, replied: 'will you not scatter the crowd from me, much-enduring old man'" (DL 2.117 = F25). Bion's hexametric response is hardly intelligible, but in connection with the preceding response of Stilpo seems to simply mean that religious matters should not be discussed in public.[16] In both cases, the responses are noncommittal about the problem indicated in the questions: worshipping the gods and their existence.

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[14] Seeing in Crates' poems merely paraphrases, not parodies, as proposed by Gabriela Pianko, 'Krates z Teb – cynic i parodysta', *Meander* 9 (1954), pp. 228–229, is not quite justified. By expressing values contrary to what can be found in the originals, Crates does much more than paraphrase them. Helferich even states that Solon's elegy was only a basis of Crates' prayer and sees in it an expression of genuine piety, G. Helferich, *Krates Gebet* (Carlsruhe: Braun, 1852), pp. 12–13.

[15] The numbering of Bion's fragments is according to Jan F. Kindstrand, *Bion of Borysthenes* (Uppsala: Almquist & Wiksell, 1976).

[16] Ibid., p. 226.

On the one hand, it may be argued that religious discussion should not be conducted in any place because of the sacredness of the subject. On the other hand, if attitude toward religion is controversial and potentially dangerous, it should not be discussed in any place with any one, either. And so, Bion's hexametric response tells us perfectly nothing about how he feels about the existence of the gods.

The Sophists taught that one should argue on both sides of an issue, and Bion does so about sacrilege. Because everything belongs to the gods, whatever one takes from whatever place, he commits a sacrilegious act. On the other hand, because everything belongs to the gods, the gods still possess an item if someone takes an item from one place to another. Therefore, taking something from a temple does not amount to a sacrilege (Seneca, *De beneficiis* 7.1–2 = F33). The argument may be intended to show that sacrilege is a meaningless concept,[17] but it relies on an indiscriminate use of the word "everything." If the statement that everything belongs to the gods is assumed to be true, it does not mean that everything is equally sacred to them. Some things – most things – can be carried freely from one place to another without offending the gods; other things ought not to be moved from their place, particularly, from a temple, because of their special significance in a special place. Bion's argument is valid only if the fact of possession of things is taken into account, not the fact of the significance of things to the gods and to people. Bion probably realized that, however, his purpose was not to offer a refined argument, but to come down hard on the accepted religious views.

He also said that those carrying water in sieves in Hades would be punished more if they carried water in whole buckets (DL 4.50 = F28). On the face of it, it seems to be a trite criticism of the myth of the Danaides who were punished by having to fill a bottomless barrel with sieves for killing their husbands. Bion says that drawing and carrying water when it does not leak out from whole buckets would be a more strenuous exercise. This rather unimaginative criticism can be interpreted as an indirect way of indicating that Hades does not exist, at least that punishment in Hades is a ridiculous idea, or even that it is an indirect criticism of the mysteries,[18] but such an interpretation seems to be rather strained. The possibility of his disbelief in Hades is made stronger by his ridiculing burial rites (DL 4.48 = F71) and mourning rites (Cicero, *Tusc.* 3.62 = F69) as meaningless and futile. Life, this life, is all that is, and even this is not worth much: life is short and not much can be expected afterwards: "All affairs of people resemble their beginnings, their life is not more sacred or serious than the conception; [they return into nothingness,] born out of nothingness" (Seneca, *De tranquillitate animi* 15.4 = F72). Life itself is also a rather random exercise: one can be born as a king or as a beggar and there is no reason why it happens one way or another: fate decides (Teles, *ap.* Stobaeus 3.1.98 = F16A). It is hard to be optimistic about life; it is hard not to be pessimistic about death. Life is random; death opens no prospects. It appears, then, that for Bion, the soul is not immortal and life ends with death and thus no rewards and no punishments should be expected after death. It seems, however, that Bion relaxed this stance in his own

[17] Marie-Odile Goulet-Cazé, 'Religion and the early Cynics', in Branham and Goulet-Cazé (eds), *The Cynics*, p. 77.

[18] Kindstrand, *Bion of Borysthenes*, p. 229.

life because when he was sick, he let himself be talked into wearing amulets and recanted his blasphemies against the gods (DL 4.54 = T5).

Although a direct statement to that effect is missing in Bion's preserved fragments, Bion was considered to be an atheist and his association with Theodorus the Atheist (DL 4.52 = T19) certainly contributed to that opinion. It is also said that Bion "stated many things against the gods (πολλὰ ἀθεώτερον) in his lectures following the example of Theodorus" (DL 4.54 = T3).[19] He certainly did not assign any significant role to religious matters. He was at least a deist, but his constant criticism of religious practices shows that an atheistic attitude is not altogether repugnant to him.

The Cynics

The position of the Cynics toward religion is largely negative. They are highly critical of all the conventions accepted in society, including popular religious beliefs. They criticize effectiveness of prayers, oracles, interpretation of dreams, rites of purification, the mysteries, offerings, sacrifices, the idea of punishment after death, and divination. They even do not see anything wrong in temple robbery. They criticize anthropomorphism in theology, but do not discuss the concept of the divine. They do not see any beneficial activity of the gods in the world. There is no providence; the world works through natural laws and no action of a god can be expected to change that. The Cynics consider beliefs in Olympian gods as superstitions, but by their neglect of any positive discussion of theological problems, the Cynics show that the problems are unimportant and have little relevance to real life. They do not outright deny the existence of the gods, but it is hard to see how belief in the traditional gods could be reconciled with their few philosophical statements, some ethical pronouncement, and their lifestyle. In their criticism of anthropomorphic gods, they continue the explicit (Xenophanes, Antisthenes) and implicit (the Milesians, Anaxagoras, Heraclitus) tradition of Greek philosophy, but unlike their philosophical predecessors, they offer no positive input. With their attitude toward theology, they continue the tradition of the Sophists, but unlike the Sophists (Protagoras, Prodicus, a fragment of the *Sisyphus*), their religious criticism is limited to scorn, satire, mockery, and sarcasm.[20] A remark about Menippus can be extended to all the Cynics: "No serious treatises were produced by him, but his books overflow with ridicule" (DL 6.99). They were limited in their vision to here and now, to the passing moment of earthly life, seeing no prospect after life's end. If happiness can be found anywhere, it is on earth and the best people can do is to attempt to bring this happiness to their lives – to be sure, following the Cynic lifestyle.

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[19] Diogenes Laertius says in his poem that Bion denied the existence of the gods (DL 4.55), which "cannot be accepted as a statement of fact without corroboration from the fragments of Bion. The fragments, in which Bion treats religious questions, do not support the view," Kindstrand, *Bion of Borysthenes*, p. 149.

[20] It is true that "denunciation, renunciation, satire, negations however forcible, however witty, are impotent to develop the soul of the man that tries to subsist upon them," John MacCunn, 'The Cynics', *International Journal of Ethics* 14 (1904), p. 199.

Chapter 18

Epicurus and *Isonomia*

Universe

According to Epicurus, the whole of reality is the result of the configuration of an infinity of atoms in the infinitely extending void. Everything is made from atoms and turns into atoms. There is no providential force that guides the universe. Everything is a result of movements and collisions of atoms. However, because of their weight, atoms would move downward in the void. In order for them to collide, atoms must occasionally swerve from their downward movement,[1] otherwise "nature would never have produced anything" (Lucretius 2.224). The time and place of the swerve is not determined. It is unpredictable, random, and indispensable in two respects. Without the swerve, the universe would be a perpetual stream of atoms moving downward. Atoms are of different weight, but they fall in the void with the same speed (DL 10.61, Lucretius 2.225) and so collisions would not result from heavy atoms hitting light atoms. As a result of the swerve, atoms do not just fall, but roam through the void (*per inane vagantur*, Lucretius 2.109).[2] Moreover, the swerve is needed to account for the existence of the free will to defy the power of necessity so prominent in the Democritean version of atomism. As phrased by Plutarch, "an atom swerves to a very small extent in order that the heavy bodies, living things, and chance may come into existence and what is in our power may not perish" (*De soll. an.* 964c).

The order of the universe emerges from apparently chaotic movements of atoms and is not permanent. From eternity to eternity, there is a continuous process of the building of new worlds from eternally existing atoms and a process of destruction of the worlds. Nothing is permanent except for the building blocks of the universe, atoms, their inherent movement, and place for their movement, the void (DL 10.39–45).

In spite of the ubiquity of randomness characterizing the motion of atoms, the universe is ordered. Its orderliness is guaranteed by the principle of "exact balance in all creation – what Epicurus calls *isonomia* or equal distribution," according to which "if the destructive elements in the world are countless, the forces of conservation must likewise be countless" (Cicero, *ND* 1.50; Lucretius 2.569–576 speaks about "balanced strife" of motions of destruction and motions of creation and increase). That is, notwithstanding the processes of destruction and decay observed everywhere, there are forces allowing for emergence of new beings. The creative or preserving forces are not limited to a particular period of the universe's existence. They are coeval with

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[1] Cicero, *De fato* 46, *De finibus* 1.19; Diogenes of Oenoanda, fr. 32; Aetius 1.12.5, 1.23.4.

[2] The verb *vagor* suggests inconstancy and fluctuation, as observed by Pierre-Marie Morel, *Atome et nécessité: Démocrite, Épicure, Lucrèce* (Paris: PUF, 2000), p. 46.

the forces of destruction, but they do not have to be active in the same place at the same time.[3] The nature of the universe is pronounced to be such that its orderliness is possible. In this, Epicurus transfers the ability to infuse matter with order from a supreme divinity to nature itself. There is no cosmic intelligence needed to assure the possibility of order in the universe. But random motion of atoms in the void seemingly does not suffice to account for what exists. There have to be some preservation forces – and infinity of them at that – which allow for the ordered status of the universe. In this, merely by a *fiat* Epicurus endows matter with what only intelligible force could accomplish in other philosophical systems. The forces of conservation can hardly be reduced to the random motion of atoms, to chance alone. Their motion is under control of preservation forces that belong to the supra-atomic level. A perspective of a single atom is insufficient to assure the validity of the *isonomia* principle. The principle works on the cosmic level and requires global perspective to assure that the forces of conservation (and creation) are countless. The principle is not implied by the fact that there exists an infinity of randomly moving atoms in the infinite void. The conservation forces are the forces regulating the motions of atoms; the existence of the former cannot be automatically inferred from the latter. By positing the existence of the *isonomia* principle, Epicurus introduces teleology into his system.[4]

This *isonomia* principle can be called upon to explain the process of emergence of a world. Epicurus points to the fact that seeds – individual atoms (Lucretius 2.755,773,988) or small conglomerates of atoms (6.160, 200) – have to be of "the right kind," gradually making "junctions and articulations," that is, generating various bodies in orderly fashion (DL 10.89; Lucretius 2.1112–1119). The *isonomia* principle assures that there are infinite pockets of orderliness in the universe that balance the presence of disorder in other parts. But this general principle does not directly explain the process of generation of particular bodies. A general statement that the process of coalescence of atoms ends when capability of receiving additions ends (DL 10.89) is insufficient. The laws that govern such processes are of a less general level than the law of *isonomia*, but they still are irreducible to a mere motion of atoms. There are the laws of nature (*foedera naturae*) that impose limits in nature so that, for example, birds inherit bird features from their bird parents (Lucretius 1.584–592).[5] These laws immutably determine generation, development, and dissipation of things in nature (2.300–302; 5.310, 920–924; 6.906–909). The bird example indicates that one such law of nature is the like to like principle. Birds inherit, for example plumage, and the reason why this happens is irreducible to the explanation on the atomic level. The like to like principle acts on the atomic level

[3] These forces act alternately in our world and concurrently in the *intermundia*, according to Walter Scott, 'The physical constitution of the Epicurean gods', *Journal of Philology* 12 (1883), p. 232; cf. Günther Freymuth, 'Eine Anwendung von Epikurs Isonomiegesetz', *Philologus* 98 (1954), pp. 110–115.

[4] Norman W. DeWitt, *Epicurus and His Philosophy* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1954), p. 272, only states that in Epicureanism, "isonomy plays a part comparable to that of teleology."

[5] It is argued that the concept of a limit is more general than the concept of a natural law since limits are "equivalent not only to natural laws but also to specific forms and essences," Phillip De Lacy, 'Limit and variation in the Epicurean philosophy', *Phoenix* 23 (1969), pp. 106–107.

as well, but similarity of atoms in the plumage of a bird and its parent is insufficient to explain the existence of similarity of the plumage. The principle also acts on the level of atom conglomerates, on the level of structures and arrangements which cannot be reduced to the level of atoms. And Epicurus' rebuke that Democritus' reliance on necessity is unsatisfactory as an explanatory principle (DL 10.90) can be countered with an argument that necessity is just as general as the law of *isonomia* and manifests itself as laws leading to the emergence of worlds through the movement of atoms and more specific laws such as the ones used by Epicurus. Moreover, the power of cosmic necessity is strongly felt in the Epicurean cosmos as well: "I teach the law that presides over the whole of creation, the necessity (*necessum*) to which everything is submitted, nothing being able to break from strict bonds of time" (Lucretius 5.56–58). This overall necessity is thus the same as the *isonomia* principle that keeps matter in its bonds. Thus, the Epicurean nature is not just the totality of atoms roaming in the void, but also the laws that keep this roaming in check, primarily the *isonomia* law and one of its manifestations, the like to like principle. The Epicurean nature is not just "the blind activity of the universe, the sum of all matter and motion,"[6] because the laws of nature are irreducible to this matter and motion. The element of indeterminacy is introduced through the presence of the swerve, but this swerve is not completely unrestricted. It takes place under the supervision of the cosmic *isonomia* law and its subsidiary *foedera naturae*. The universe is not unordered. The orderliness is as much a part of the universe as its disorderliness. The order does not emerge from chaos, from chaotic motion of atoms, but is already part of nature. Cosmic order makes possible that the orderliness is maintained in the universe and that disorderly motion inherent in atoms does not turn the world into a chaotic mass of the infinity of atoms. Disorder is not a matrix of order; order has its source in order. Although disorder in nature is coeval with its orderliness, the latter is ontologically prior to the former. Disorder allows for creating what exists but only because it is constrained and guided by order. Epicureanism thus does not admit the view of necessity as "a local effect of chance [and] the laws as the agency dependent on contingence."[7]

The *isonomia* principle states that both destructive elements and forces of conservation are infinite. Because of this infinity, the condition is satisfied when for a million atoms only one swerves once in a million years, or when in a million atoms all except one swerve once a second. According to Long, Epicurus "could make only the most minimal concession to spontaneous or purely contingent events," and he limits the presence of the swerve in nature to the moment of the formation of a world.[8] Similarly, with the problem of free will. As already mentioned, the

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[6] DeWitt, *Epicurus and his philosophy*, p. 222.

[7] Alain Gigandet, 'Natura gubernans (Lucrèce, V, 77)', in Carlos Lévy (ed.), *Le Concept de nature* à *Rome: la physique* (Paris: Presses de l'École normale supérieure, 1966), p. 223; similarly, Morel, *Atome et nécessité*, p. 51; he also states that nature is originally without order; but the Epicurean world is without beginning and so there is no original state in which nature could be without order.

[8] A.A. Long, 'Chance and natural law in Epicureanism', *Phronesis* 22 (1977), pp. 87, 78–79, 85.

existence of the swerve allows Epicurus to assure that not all human decisions are predetermined, in short, free will is due to the swerve (Lucretius 2.284–293; Cicero *ND* 1.69). But this does not amount to disorderliness of human decisions. It is possible to reduce the impact of the swerve in voluntary action: it is enough to break the power of determinism if only one atom swerves and "too many might make the behaviour entirely random."[9] Because each atom is capable of a swerve, and time and place of the swerve is random, it is possible that the mind can be overwhelmed by the swerves. How is the number of the swerves kept in check? Epicureans provide no answer, but a version of the *isonomia* can be called as an explanatory principle: for a number of determined atom movements there has to be a similar number of swerves. Although *isonomia* cannot force an atom to a swerve, the latter being random, it can control its occurrence by suppressing it and giving an upper hand to the motion of an atom due to a blow of another atom. The number of such controlled movements has to balance the number of swerves. Swerves' "consequences must not disrupt the fixed limits of natural processes but must only add variety within those limits."[10] As a result, the freedom of decisions can be maintained, where freedom is not tantamount to chaos and complete irregularity. In this way, the swerve becomes a "kind of mechanical liberty"[11] and necessity is also an indispensable element of freedom.

The existence of the swerve was usually somewhat embarrassing, so one way to dispense with the problem was to reduce its presence to the very minimum. But because there is no prescribed time or space for the occurrence of the swerve, reducing its existence only to a moment of universe creation or to the moment of conception is the strongest expression of a belief that randomness is controlled by orderliness. It seems that the swerve is a constant occurrence in the Epicurean world and has to be constantly controlled by the forces of preservation, by minimizing its possibly disrupting effects or preventing it from happening.[12] In this way, the swerve is reduced to the potency of the atom capable of being actualized at any time and place, but its occurrence depends on the powers of preservation, on the laws of nature. When enforced by these laws, a swerve can actually occur once in a lifetime of a world, after all.

Nature and its laws are also considered to be non-purposive and blind so that the intelligibility of humans must be considered to be the result of blind, although orderly, laws of nature interplaying with the randomness of atomic motions. However, this is not entirely the case if we consider the curious status of the gods in the Epicurean universe.

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[9] J.M. Rist, *Epicurus: an introduction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972), p. 94. Rist follows David J. Furley, *Two Studies in the Greek Atomists* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967), p. 232; cf. Walter J. Englert, *Epicurus on the Swerve and Voluntary Action* (Atlanta: Scholarly Press, 1987), p. 128.

[10] De Lacy, 'Limit and variation in the Epicurean philosophy', pp. 108–109.

[11] Jean Brun, *L'Épicurisme* (Paris: PUF, 1966), p. 59.

[12] Cf. the statement that "in the soul of the wise the swerve must be in service of the whole, it is a means for constant assimilation of influences that benefit inner harmony and inner balance," Knut Kleve, *Gnosis theon. Die Lehre von der natürlichen Gotteserkenntnis in der epikureischen Theologie* (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1963), p. 120.

The gods

In the very first principal doctrine, Epicurus refers to blessed and indestructible beings (DL 10.139), who are the gods, as commented by a scholiast and as can be gathered from an explicit reference by Epicurus himself to a god as an indestructible and blessed animal. And he did not have any doubt that the gods exist (DL 10.123): "Epicurus reproached for their complete madness those who eliminate the divine from existing things" (Philodemus, *De pietate* 519–523, Obbink).

Just like individual atoms or the void, the gods cannot be perceived through the senses – "subtle is the nature of the gods, far removed from the perception of our senses, and with difficulty is it seen by a part of the soul [called] the mind" (Lucretius 5.148–149). This is because the *eidola* emitted from them are of extreme tenuity (Aetius 1.7.34) since gods themselves are tenuous (*tenuis natura*, Lucretius 5.148). The gods can be perceived directly through the mind in a manner of extrasensory perception and experienced in dreams and visions.[13] During waking hours and during sleep, the *eidola* of the gods permeate through the rough structure of the human body to reach the mind.

By living in the *intermundia* (μετακόσμια), the gods are not subjected to dangers that can compromise their immortality.[14] There, they are free from cares, from earthly catastrophes, and so on,[15] do not experience any suffering to be found in the human world (Lucretius 2.646–651), and know total happiness (DL 10.123). They are endowed with voice and form bonds among themselves. They breathe, eat, and drink, but require no sleep. They speak in Greek or in "something not far different."[16]

How is the gods' immortality maintained? Cicero reports that "an infinite stream of very similar images formed from the innumerable atoms arises and flows towards the gods" (*ND* 1.49). The fact that *eidola* flow toward the gods may be considered a necessary mechanism to constantly maintain the existence of the gods. Because they are made from atoms, they themselves emit *eidola*, which would eventually lead to the disappearance of the gods. Humans restore their bodies through nourishment. The gods are said to eat,[17] but there may not be enough free-floating fine atoms in their inter-world sphere to be sufficient for the restoration of their bodies, and the stream of inflowing *eidola* would be an additional restoration mechanism. It is possible that this is the main mechanism if the gods' eating and drinking is purely for enjoyment, not for nourishment.[18] What is the source of the *eidola* flowing to the gods? Notwithstanding the assurance that "this is obvious: from the gods

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[13] Cicero, *ND* 1.49; DL 10.31; Lucretius 4.324–331; 6.77.

[14] Hippolytus, *Philos*. 22.3; Cicero, *ND* 1.18.

[15] Cicero, *ND* 1.18, *De fin.* 2.75, *De div.* 2.40; Lucretius 3.19–22.

[16] Philodemus, *De dis* 3, col. 13.36–14.6, Diels, but see SE 9.178.

[17] It is not impossible to claim that gods' eating and drinking should be considered a metaphor. What would they eat and drink in the *intermundia*? Tangentially, a metaphoric application of eating is made by Lucretius who uses the analogy of a creature taking nourishment during its developmental stages and the development of the world (2.1133–1149). On the problem of this analogy and its origin see Friedrich Solmsen, 'Epicurus on the growth and decline of the cosmos', *American Journal of Philology* 74 (1953), pp. 34–51.

[18] The gods must watch when they eat if eating is to "lead to enjoyment" (Philodemus, *De dis* fr. 77.5–6). The renewal of their bodies is irrelevant, enjoyment, however, is relevant.

themselves,"[19] it seems that they come from the outside, from the non-divine sphere. If they came from the gods alone, the gods would eventually dissolve into *eidola* because matter would only flow out in all directions from the gods and only a small amount of matter would flow in from other gods to compensate for the lost matter. To make such a replenishment possible, matter would have to flow in in an unstructured form, which, although nowhere suggested, is not incompatible with the Epicurean physics. Also, the only reason the incoming *eidola* are mentioned is the necessity of replenishing gods' bodies, and not an epistemological value of the *eidola*: the gods are not interested in the extradivine sphere and such an interest could only compromise their blissful state.

Are the incoming *eidola* suitable to sustain the gods? The gods are made from fine atoms and require fine atoms to be replenished. It may be assumed that, after *eidola* break through the atmosphere and its impurities and through aether, the cruder atoms will be sifted out so that the *eidola* which reach the gods are composed of atoms that are suitable as the material for the restoration of the bodies of the gods. Although the mechanism of the generation and transmission of *eidola* is unknown, it is known that each object in the world constantly generates *eidola* emitting them continuously in every direction (DL 10.48). Although the *eidola* reaching the gods are thinned out and retain only fine atoms, their amount can be sufficient to regenerate the gods if their mass is sufficiently large so that the balance of matter in outgoing and incoming *eidola* is zero.

The mechanism of *eidola* reaching the gods is simpler than the mechanism of *eidola* being spontaneously formed in the void.[20] Although some such *eidola* can occasionally be created from atoms floating in the void, it is unlikely that this way of generating *eidola* for the gods should suffice for the whole of eternity. The existence of the gods would be precariously uncertain if it depended on spontaneous generation of *eidola* needed to regenerate them. Also, it is more natural to take *eidola* in this context in their normal meaning, namely as images of something. Moreover, the mechanism suggested here is simpler than the mechanism of building *eidola* in the human soul, the ideal representations of the gods.[21] In this way, unless it is

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Cf. L. Carrau, 'Épicure, son époque, sa religion d'après de récens travaux', *Revue des Deux Mondes* 1 août 1888, p. 671.

[19] Jaap Mansfeld, 'Aspects of Epicurean theology', *Mnemosyne* 46 (1993), p. 196.

[20] The latter mechanism is suggested by Jules Lachelier, 'Les dieux d'Épicure d'après le De natura deorum de Cicéron', *Revue de Philologie* 1 (1877), p. 265; Scott, 'The physical constitution of the Epicurean gods', p. 214; Michel Malherbe, 'La théologie matérialiste d'Épicure', *Archives de philosophie* 40 (1977), p. 375. Joseph Moreau, 'Épicure et la physique des dieux', *Revue des Études Anciennes* 70 (1968), pp. 292, 294, says that the gods are regenerated by *eidola* and that the infinity of atoms floating freely in the *intermundia* is a necessary condition for formation of the gods, so the *eidola* in question must be formed from these atoms. To the same category belongs the statement that the gods "are the most beautiful products of chance," Jean Salem, *L'Atomisme antique: Démocrite, Épicure, Lucrèce* (Paris: Livre de poche, 1997), p. 111.

[21] Georg Pfligersdorfer, 'Cicero über Epikurs Lehre vom Wesen der Götter', *Wiener Studien* 70 (1957), pp. 235–253. In this way, the existence of the gods becomes illusory: "the Epicurean gods are not living beings with an objective existence independent of human minds. They are idealizations of human life, constructed by the right-minded as projections

allowed that such ideal representations are generated unconsciously, the existence of the gods would depend on men's thinking about them. It would be detrimental to their existence if people ceased thinking about the gods. Religious ceremonies may enhance humans' thinking about the gods and thus the latter's well-being, but in no wise is this a guarantee that the gods remain indestructible.

In introducing the mechanism of *eidola* feedback, Epicurus could have been influenced by Theophrastus.[22] For Theophrastus, the entire cosmos is uniform, there is no distinction between sub- and supralunary spheres, and the laws of physics apply equally everywhere. The problem Theophrastus faced was the eternity of the world. Aristotle could explain it by immutability and eternity of the fifth element, and this element is missing in the Theophrastean universe. Therefore, the sun could be extinguished by constant emission of heat. This danger is prevented by the sun's drawing some substances from the earth that are needed to generate heat (*De ventis* 15–16; Aetius 2.20.3). This mechanism presupposes the doctrine of ἀνταπόδοσις, restitution, mutual exchange, circulation, the law of preservation of matter of sorts.[23] Similarly in the Epicurean system, the eternity of the gods is assured by constant inflow of rectified *eidola* from the earthly sphere.

The gods, just as other bodies, constantly emit *eidola* (Cicero, *ND* 1.114; Lucretius 6.76–77). The process of emitting *eidola* belies the statement that some gods "are composed of the same atoms at all times."[24] From one moment to the next, the number of atoms in the constitution of the gods is reduced by the outflow of *eidola*. The quoted statement can be softened to the claim that some gods do not need any *eidola* for their restoration. This would be possible if in one moment an *eidolon* of thickness *t* were emitted, in the next moment, of thickness *t*/2, in the next, of thickness *t*/4, then *t*/8, and so on. In this way, the body beneath the layer of the thickness 2*t* would remain untouched by the outflow of *eidola*. But in order for this adaptation of Zeno's bisection argument to work, there should not be any limit to the size of atoms, which is expressly denied by Epicurean physics.[25] Therefore, the gods retain the structure throughout their existence, but atoms used to that end are similar (fine and round, DL 10.66), never the same.[26]

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from the appropriate images that they receive: with these images they associate their *natural* understanding of the essence of sublime happiness," A.A. Long, 'Epicureans and Stoics', in A.H. Armstrong (ed.), *Classical Mediterranean Spirituality* (New York: Crossroad, 1986), p. 142; similarly, Jeffrey Purinton, 'Epicurus on the nature of the gods', *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy* 21 (2001), pp. 186, 192–193, 231.

[22] For influences of Theophrastus on Epicurus see Erich Reitzenstein, *Theophrast bei Epicur und Lucrez* (Heidelberg: Winter, 1924).

[23] Peter Steinmetz, *Die Physik des Theophrastos von Eresos* (Bad Homburg: Gehlen, 1964), pp. 31, 163–166, 327.

[24] DeWitt, *Epicurus and His Philosophy*, pp. 249, 264–265.

[25] DL 10.42–43, 56. The validity of this argument would allow for an infinity of atoms in one finite body, which also is disallowed, DL 10.57.

[26] Philodemus, *De dis* 3, col. 10.38–11.2, probably also Lucretius 5.1175–1176; cf. José Kany-Turpin, 'Les images divines: Cicéron lecteur d'Épicure', *Revue Philosophique de la France et de l'Étranger* 176 (1986), pp. 48, 53–54.

The primary attributes of the gods are their incorruptibility and blessedness. According to the Epicurean theology, the maintenance of these attributes is possible if the gods are not worried about anything, because "trouble, concern, anger, and favor are incompatible with blessedness" (DL 10.77). They enjoy "immunity from burdensome duties" (Cicero, *Acad.* 2.121). The gods, in fact, are not interested in human affairs at all because such an interest in imperfect beings would compromise their perfection. True, it is said that a sage "calls the wise the friends of the gods and the gods the friends of the wise" (Philodemus, *De dis* 3, col. 2.17–18), but this is friendship of those who are like them, not of ordinary people with their troubles who, not infrequently, expect and require some help. Friendship is very important among men, and "the man who never associates help with friendship cuts off good expectations concerning the future" (Vatican Saying 39). There is no association of help and friendship for the gods. The gods can be friends only to the people who, to put it bluntly, do not bother them.[27] Help is beneath the gods' dignity and so their friendship is vacuous, directed to those who require no assistance, no helping hand.[28] If the gods are considered the paragon of happiness, then friendship in human relations as commonly understood is but a necessary evil, and the true sage who strives for the ideal of human happiness should turn back to the world and its mundane affairs, and his friendship is merely the fondness of those who want nothing of the sage. So it appears that one can count on help from anyone but a sage. Like in the case of the gods, a sage would compromise his status by reaching to anyone who asks for help. The circle of friends among Epicureans must not include the sages. And those who are in the circle do their best to attain the status of a sage, that is, to leave the circle, to be like gods.

In this view of the gods, Epicurus aligns himself with Aristotle, whose Unmoved Mover was even unaware of the existence of the world because such an awareness would make the Unmoved Mover less than perfect.[29] In this way, the fear of divine retribution is defused, and human life becomes automatically more enjoyable, more pleasurable. But at the same time, hope of a reward after death is also abolished, and thus all human efforts should concentrate on this life. The existence of evil in the world is used as an argument in favor of the view that the gods are detached from the world. If God can eliminate evil and does not do it, he is spiteful, which contradicts his divinity, says Epicurus (Lactantius, *De ira Dei* 13.21). Apparently it is compatible with the gods' divinity to be disinterested in worldly affairs and not to

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[27] "It is solely the benefit derived from the correctness of his ideas concerning the nature of the gods, particularly the fact that they do not concern themselves with human affairs, which 'helps' the wise man," Philip Merlan, *Studies in Epicurus and Aristotle* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1960), p. 49 note 25.

[28] Just as vacuous is their ability to love ("they are not incapable of loving," claims DeWitt, *Epicurus and His Philosophy*, p. 283) and it is impossible to agree with the view that this was a "preview of Christianity" because "the idea of love between man and God would not have seemed a novelty to Epicureans," p. 250.

[29] A parallel between Aristotle's and Epicurus' view of the divine was already drawn by Atticus in the second century AD, Philip Merlan, 'Aristoteles' und Epicurs müssige Götter', *Zeitschrift für Philosophische Forschung* 21 (1967), p. 494; Hans J. Krämer, *Platonismus und hellenistische Philosophie* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1971), p. 132.

learn whether their assistance may be needed. It is not spiteful to turn from the world altogether and not a sign of weakness not to think that in this world something may be far from perfection. The saying that ignorance is bliss acquires truly theological significance for an Epicurean.

Although the gods are indifferent to humans and they "stand in no need of worship,"[30] humans should not be indifferent to the gods. People should worship them, "sacrifice piously and properly" (Philodemus, *De pietate* 879–881), and enjoy participating in religious festivals (DL 10.120). Epicurus himself "participated in all the traditional festivals and sacrifices"[31] and promoted piety (Philodemus, *De pietate* 730–51, 758–70). Through this participation, humans acquire better understanding of divine nature (766–68). Contemplation of the gods by humans provides them with "the greatest feeling of pleasure" (Cicero, *ND* 1.49). The gods are thus reduced to the role of models of human life.[32] They are images of what humans can expect to attain in this life if they try hard, if they become sages. The Epicurean deism enhances self-centeredness. The Epicurean token theology is merely a foil to center men's attention on this world; other-worldliness of the gods is used to stress this-worldliness of the human condition.

Knowledge of the gods is inborn: "There are gods, because the knowledge of them is manifest" (DL 10.123; *innatae cognitiones*, Cicero, *ND* 1.44). Epicurus was the first to see "that the gods exist, because nature herself has imprinted a conception of them on the minds of all mankind. For what nation or tribe of men is there but possesses untaught (*sine doctrina*) some preconceptions of the gods? Such notions Epicurus designated by the word *prolepsis*" (Cicero, *ND* 1.43). There exists, thus, a definition of essence,[33] an inborn concept, *prolepsis*, of the gods as incorruptible and perfectly happy beings. The idea of the divinity is stamped or even engraved (*insculpsit*) by nature on the human mind (1.43, 45). However, the inborn concept has to be actualized, it has to be stimulated to reveal the riches of its content. A dream can be such a stimulus (SE 9.25). Rather than being a philosophical antonym of Plato's *anamnesis*,[34] *prolepsis* is its adaptation. But this concept of divinity is falsified by opinions not based on experience, which leads to the emergence of myths.

It is a dogmatic statement that the gods must be the most perfect beings. Because the gods are part of the material universe and because the universe is infinite, there may exist an infinite scale of perfection, extending downward and upward, with no most perfect being, nor, for that matter, the least perfect being.[35] The existence of most perfect divinities can be just a matter of belief in the validity of the *prolepsis*

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[30] In Philodemus' words, "the divine (τὸ δαιμόνιον) stands in no need of worship" (*De musica* 4.7–8).

[31] Philodemus, *De pietate* 793–797; Plutarch, *Non posse* 1095e; DL 10.10.

[32] The gods are only models of beatitude, according to Long, 'Epicureans and Stoics', p. 144.

[33] Anke Manuwald, *Die Prolepsislehre Epikurs* (Bonn: Habelt, 1972), p. 104, cf. pp. 78, 107.

[34] As claimed by DeWitt, *Epicurus and His Philosophy*, p. 146.

[35] It is a curious argument that "if no perfect being existed, the universe would not be altogether infinite," DeWitt, *Epicurus and His Philosophy*, p. 260. And why should only "moderate degree of gradation" among the gods (p. 263) be assumed? In the infinite universe

concerning their nature. Only this belief allows Epicurus to claim that gods exist "because there must be some outstanding nature than which there is no better."[36]

Being most perfect, the gods must have most perfect shape and "what configuration of lines, what shape, what aspect can be more beautiful than that of man?" (Cicero, *ND* 1.47).[37] And hence, the gods are beings in human form. However, they are not bodies as solid as the bodies of humans; they are quasi-bodies in which flows quasi-blood (1.49), very much like "blood immortal, *ichor*," in the veins of traditional gods (*Il.* 5.339–340).[38] They do not have "numerical distinctiveness" of the objects of the daily experience, which would suggest that the gods are really one god that manifests himself as different divinities.

For Epicurus, the gods are indestructible. However, their continued existence is inconsistent with the conditions for indestructibility according to which only atoms, the void, and nature as a whole "last forever" (Lucretius 3.806–818, 5.351–363). Moreover, the Epicureans, according to Plutarch, "represent eternal life as accruing to God through guarding against and removing the destructive forces" (*De defectu orac.* 420d). The gods are incorruptible, but they have to attend to their incorruptibility. They are not congenitally immortal, but theirs is adventitious immortality.[39] It is thus possible that the gods can cease to exist if they do not make an effort to maintain their existence. It belongs to their nature that they will not abandon their care for their existence, but this existence is not unconditional and hinges upon their attention given to it. As Plutarch indicates, they stand in "need of constant concern" and, according to Epicurus, "the gods take all diligent care for the preservation of their own peculiar blessings" (Eusebius, *Praep. ev.* 15.5.9). Each god "is completely preoccupied with his own happiness and indestructibility and so is not concerned with human affairs" (Aetius 1.7.7). It is unclear how the gods can accomplish it, but certainly their *intermundial* dwelling is part of the process.[40] It may well be that just thinking about that is sufficient to avert their destruction. Or, conversely, it is possible that by making an effort not to think about the possibility of destruction, they avoid it. In any event, if continuance of existence is a desirable state, it is hard

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with an infinity of atoms, there does not have to be an upper bound on the degree of gradation among any beings.

[36] Cicero, *ND* 2.46; Lactantius, *De ira Dei* 9.4.

[37] The true reason for the anthropomorphic character of the gods is that they are the model of happiness, and "who could imagine what is the happiness of a cylinder of a sphere?," asks rhetorically Dietrich Lemke, *Die Theologie Epikurs: Versuch einer Rekonstruktion* (München: Beck, 1973), p. 101. Cf. the remark that "it would be somewhat painful to adore a divinity that is too different from man," Carrau, 'Épicure, son époque, sa religion d'après de récens travaux', p. 672.

[38] "Probably the limbs of the gods are from cruder, air-like soul atoms, the inner organs and blood from finer breath-like and fiery [atoms], and the soul of the gods consists of the fourth, nameless soul substance," says Lemke, *Die Theologie Epikurs*, p. 41.

[39] Merlan, *Studies*, 59 note 44; cf. Philip Merlan, 'Zwei Fragen der epikureischen Theologie', *Hermes* 68 (1933), pp. 208–217; Lemke, *Die Theologie Epikurs*, p. 39; Freymuth, 'Eine Anwendung von Epikurs Isonomiegesetz', pp. 112–113.

[40] "The Epicurean gods, made from accidental atoms, are liable to dissipation, so they labor to avoid atoms that threaten with destruction," Origen, *Contra Celsum* 4.14.

not to think that the gods are worried about the possibility of corruption, and a worry spells imperfection. It appears that humans are better off in respect to mortality: they know inevitable death awaits them and thus should not be worried now, in its absence, and they certainly will not worry after death (DL 10.125); the gods, on the other hand, are perennially worried because destruction could befall them.

The gods appear to be redundant beings in the Epicurean universe. Being perfect, they keep this perfection to themselves, mindful of the fact that sharing it means a danger of damaging it. They are models of what the sage should be able to accomplish, if only partially. They are to be worshipped, but it is hardly understandable why humans should do it. To worship their remoteness? Their disinterest in anything but themselves? Worship thus appears to be redundant just as much as their existence. It is not surprising that already in antiquity Epicurus was accused of hypocrisy[41] and even outright atheism. He certainly rejected the gods of mythology (DL 10.123–124). Although Philodemus of Gadara wrote *On piety* to defend Epicurus from the accusation of atheism, he was considered an atheist already by Posidonius (Cicero, *ND* 1.123), Plutarch (*Adv. Col.* 1112c, 1119de) and Cicero (*ND* 1.43), and his statement that he does believe in their existence was only made to counteract the hostility of the Athenians (Posidonius).

However, there may be an ontological reason why the gods are retained in Epicureanism. Order in the Epicurean universe does not emerge from chaos. But how about life and intelligibility? They may be considered results of natural laws exerting their power on the motion of atoms. Although the laws are themselves inanimate, by imposing order onto matter, they lead to the emergence of life and intelligibility. But maybe resorting to such a claim is not necessary. There is no need for a prime mover in the universe in which atoms are in motion from eternity to eternity (DL 10.43). Analogically, there is no need for a claim that life and intelligibility emerge from inanimate and unintelligible matter if life and intelligibility also exist from eternity. In the spirit of Koheleth, Epicurus states that the world always was and will be as it is (DL 10.39). Thus, the gods exist from eternity and will so exist being indestructible. Through the existence of the gods, the world was always saturated with life and intelligibility, even its highest possible form.

As indicated above, the gods are regenerated by absorption of *eidola* coming from the worldly sphere and purified along the way. It may very well be that *eidola* emitted by the gods are not only impacting the human soul to, so to speak, let it know that the gods exist, but they are also absorbed by the soul to maintain its existence. Also, the *eidola* of the gods can be used to create life and humans, intelligible beings. In this scenario, life begets life, intelligibility begets intelligibility,[42] and all this is possible through some inscrutable natural laws, the laws that have the same level of complexity

[41] Plutarch, *Non posse* 1102b–d; Cicero, *ND* 1.23. In a more toned down fashion, it is suggested that "Epicurus preferred to follow tradition" in his theology not introducing new gods "which was an indictable offense," DeWitt, *Epicurus and His Philosophy*, p. 261, cf. pp. 184–185, and that his abstention to reject the gods is due to "the prudence of not proclaiming atheism in a society which took its gods very seriously," Peter Preuss, *Epicurean Ethics: katastematic hedonism* (Lewiston: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1994), p. 14.

[42] At least in this sense, it is true that consciousness is a cause of itself, as stated by Robert M. Strozier, *Epicurus and Hellenistic Philosophy* (Lanham: University Press of America, 1985), pp. 133–134.

and intricacy as the laws which allow the gods to maintain their eternal existence. The gods are, in this way, as much the models of blessedness as the fulcra of life in general and reasonableness of humans in particular. There is constant mutual feedback between the world of the gods and the remaining world through the exchange of *eidola*. *Eidola*, in this way, have not only epistemological meaning in general, not only religious meaning in the case of the gods, but also an ontological meaning as the way of exchanging organized matter between different parts of the universe. This mechanism would be an instantiation of the like to like principle – like the gods and consequently their *eidola*, the soul is from fine and round atoms (Lucretius 3.180,187,244) – and the principle that nothing can stem from nothing (Lucretius 1.149). Everything stems from proper seeds (1.169), both in animate (1.174–177) and in inanimate nature (5.660–668), and so "everything arises from something definite and specific."[43] It can be thus claimed that life arises from life and is maintained by life, and so is intelligibility. The moment of procreation supplies the beginning of life, but life constantly dissipates if only through the emission of *eidola*, and so has to be regenerated through life if only in the form of *eidola* coming from life.

In this way, the gods would not be at best postulates of practical reason – unimportant in their own right, but important to assure the validity of Epicurean ethics[44] – but they would play a vital part in the universe. The gods do not create anything, but without them humans in particular and life in general, would not exist. The gods are participants in human affairs, after all, if only through the general mechanism of the *eidola* emission.[45] Through these *eidola*, the gods have a real impact upon the world and no consent of theirs or active participation is needed to accomplish it. By participating in religious ceremonies and by maintaining a worshipful attitude toward the gods, people keep themselves pure and thereby make easier, through the like to like principle, the blending of gods' *eidola* with their souls, thus enhancing the quality of life.[46] Worship would have a genuinely vital part in part of every person. Also, worship of the gods would not only be an obligatory exercise to satisfy the requirements of

[43] Friedrich Solmsen, 'Epicurus and cosmological heresies', *American Journal of Philology* 72 (1951), p. 20.

[44] Epicurus venerated the gods since they are "the models of the felicity to which the sage can arrive" and so according to the *Letter to Menoeceus*, such a sage who attains *ataraxia* is a living god in the midst of the perishable world, Brun, *L'Épicurisme*, p. 88. And so in the Epicurean religion, "the real addressee is the worshipper and that piety is a way to concentrate on and to care for one's own mortal self," Michael Erler, 'Epicurus and deus mortalis: Homoiosis theoi and Epicurean self-cultivation', in D. Frede and A. Laks (eds), *Traditions in Theology*, Leiden: Brill 2002, p. 175.

[45] George D. Hadzsits, 'Significance of worship and prayer among the Epicureans', *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association* 39 (1908), pp. 82, 85, mentions reciprocal relation between men and the gods, but it is a relation that takes place without the gods' participation. The relation matters a great deal to men, but nothing to the gods.

[46] William H. FitzGerald, 'Pietas Epicurea', *Classical Journal* 46 (1951), p. 198, mentions a communion between men and the gods through the *eidola*; the communion and worshippers' tranquillity can be disturbed by downplaying religious exercises.

tradition, not only "enjoyable realization of the divine sphere,"[47] but an expression of gratitude for existence. This gratitude, however, would be of the same level as the gratitude expressed to, say, air and water as indispensable for the continuation of life. The attitude toward the gods thus fits the tenor of the Epicurean philosophy and ethics: it is a purely self-serving and self-centered enterprise.

Theology

A specific application of the *isonomia* principle is the proportion of mortal and immortal creatures: "if there is a specific quantity of moral creatures, the tally of immortals is no fewer" (Cicero, *ND*, 1.50), but, let us hasten to add, it can be larger. Order is thus more prevalent in the universe than disorder. Order manifests itself more in the existence of immortal beings than in beings that eventually perish. In the universe, that is uniform in respect to the building material, atoms, uniformity is broken by imposing the law of imperishability onto at least as many beings as the number of beings that do not last forever. Atoms and their structure by themselves do not suffice to ensure the perennial existence of the gods. The atoms composing them, in fact, seem to be unfavorable by their tenuity as the material of immortals, all the more that the void in which they live is not so void, but filled with traveling *eidola* and stray atoms that can hurt the delicate structure of immortal bodies. And yet, the immortals are imperishable. This is the working of the *isonomia* principle. In this way, the atoms are merely material causes, but the existence and preservation of the gods cannot be explained in atomic terms. Against all odds, the gods can exist because there is more to nature than the movements of atoms. The nature is inherently structured by also structuring random movements of atoms. Nature and its laws encompass the divine and non-divine spheres. Theology is a consequence of physics because theology is first absorbed into physics.

In the Epicurean universe, nature as a whole absorbs orderliness, whose source was seen to be the divine sphere by other Greek philosophers. The divine *Apeiron* of Anaximander is dispatching justice in the world, for Epicurus, justice has its source in nature (Principal Doctrine 31). Justice has its source, in particular, in the *isonomia* principle as suggested by the judicial provenance of the term *isonomia*, which referred to equal distribution of rights of citizens.[48] *Isonomia* acquires in Epicureanism the connotation of cosmic justice, which is the province of the divine. Also, there is no divine Heraclitean Logos, but the *isonomia* principle plays its role. The providence of the Stoic Logos is rejected, but its weaker form is included in the *isonomia* principle. There is no need for a Platonic Demiurge or Anaxagoras' Mind to create a world because the universe as a whole is eternal, and the creation process of particular worlds is supervised by eternal natural laws. In this, the laws play the role of the Demiurge and Mind. Epicurus is not far in his theology from his philosophical predecessors, although his theology is not always expressed in overtly theological terms.

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[47] This is claimed to be the only meaning of the Epicurean prayer, Wolfgang Schmid, 'Götter und Menschen in der Theologie Epikurs', *Rheinisches Museum* 94 (1951), p. 138.

[48] Plato, *Menex.* 239a; *Rep.* 563b; Charles Mugler, 'L'isonomie des atomistes', *Revue de Philologie* 30 (1956), p. 231.

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Chapter 19

Early Stoics and the Logos

In the opening line of his hymn to Zeus, Cleanthes refers to Zeus as πολυώνυμος, the one of many names. Although it is a customary denomination in hymns to the gods, the Stoics took this very seriously, and there is no shortage of names given to God in the extant fragments and testimonies. For example, "Zeno names logos the disposer of the things of nature and maker of the universe. He calls it fate, necessity of things, God, and the mind (*animus*) of Zeus" (Lactantius, *De vera sap.* 9 = 1.160),[1] and, in the words of Diogenes Laertius, the Stoics say that "God and mind (*nous*), fate (*heimarmene*) and Zeus are one, but called by many different names" (DL 7.135 = 1.102). A theologically interesting problem is to what extent these names reflect the Stoic conception of divinity and whether these names can be reconciled with one another as descriptions of the Stoic God. In this chapter, some of these names are scrutinized and connections between them are established to arrive at the concept of God in the Stoic doctrine.

Logos

Beginning with Zeno, the Stoics claimed that there are two principles – passive and unqualified substance (οὐσία) or matter (ὕλη), and active logos or God – and four elements: fire, water, air, and earth (DL 7.134 = 1.85, 2.299). Both God and matter are eternal (Stobaeus 1.11.5a = 1.87). The result of the conjunction of God and matter is qualified matter. This conjunction has shape and occupies space. The two *archai* are never found in separation from one another.[2] Matter is corporeal,[3] but at the same time without form and attributes (DL 7.134 = 1.85), which is difficult to reconcile with its corporeality. A true attribute of substrate is its passivity. Logos is an active principle that gives matter form and motion.[4]

To account for multiplicity of things, the Stoics introduce *logoi spermatikoi*. Individual beings develop according to the *logoi spermatikoi*, and particular events develop in an order of necessary succession (Aetius 1.7.33 = 2.1027).

In the development of their system, the Stoics were influenced to a considerable extent by the science of the day, in particular, by medicine and biology. The Stoics were also interested in logic, and their logical analyses, in particular, Chrysippus', mark an emergence of propositional logic. The presence of the two fields – science and logic – is reflected also in their terminology and Heinze is correct in his observation

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[1] Numbers after equal sign refer to Hans von Arnim, *Stoicorum veterum fragmenta* (Leipzig: Teubner, 1903–24; reprinted Dubuque: Brown, 1967), vols. 1–4,

[2] Cicero, *Acad.* 1.24; Calcidius 294 = 1.87; Proclus, *In Tim.*1.266.21–28 = 2.307.

[3] Alexander, *De mixt.* 224.32 = 2.310; Aetius 1.9.2 = 2.325.

[4] Simplicius, *In Phys*. 25.15 = 2.312; DL 7.134 = 1.85; Seneca, *Ep*. 65.2 = 2.303.

that *logos spermatikos* is the strongest link between the logical and biological aspects of their system.[5] Observing regularities in nature – particularly in the inviolable sequences of phases of developments of various organisms – and establishing rigid logical rules lead to a generalization of cosmic regularities that are individualized in plants, animals, and men. Harmony, and thus reasonableness of the world, is found primarily in observed and established regularities, developments, and sequences of natural events. In this sense, attempts of equating *logoi spermatikoi* with Platonic ideas, as done already by Proclus (*In Parm.* 887.26–32 = 2.717), are incorrect. Ideas are embodiments of essences of material things. History and development is, in Plato's philosophy, the responsibility of the Demiurge, who shapes the world, and of self-moving souls. The Stoics do not really have a counterpart to Platonic ideas. There are no eternal paragons according to which things develop, no model for the development of, for example, a maple tree. Development of each plant begins with a seed and this seed has already implanted within it all the stages of the plant's development. A sequence in which these stages unfold is the responsibility of the *logos spermatikos* of this particular plant. To use a simile of a film reel,[6] a seed is like a collection of frames of the film; the logos is the sequence in which the frames are displayed. This sequence is predetermined, unshuttered, and necessary. The reel is there, from the outset, as one entity whose two aspects are the seed and the logos: the *logos spermatikos*. In this sense, it is true that the *logos spermatikos* "radically differs from a logical, mathematical necessity which links essences, not events."[7]

Logoi spermatikoi can be considered particular developmental laws corresponding to particular beings. They are encompassed by the cosmic logos, active substance, God. The primary meaning of logos is reason, rationality, whose primary manifestation in the world is not only order, harmony, infallibility of natural, but also historical, regularities. No one else but God can be the author of this cosmic harmony and because, as Cleanthes stated, there is nothing more divine than logos (*ratio*),[8] God is reason. The essence of God is his rationality.

Fire

According to Arius Didymus, Zeno stated that there are two kinds of fire: "one is undesigning (ἄτεχνον) and converting fuel into itself, the other is designing (τεχνικόν), causing growth and preservation" (Stobaeus 1.22.5 = 1.120). There is nothing extraordinary in Zeno's view. Already Plato distinguished several kinds of fire

[5] Max Heinze, *Die Lehre vom Logos in der griechischen Philosophie* (Oldenburg: Schmidt, 1872; reprinted Aalen: Scientia, 1961), p. 110.

[6] Cicero mentions a simile of an unwinding rope in *De div.* 1.127 = 2.944. As he also puts it, "all things are, but in respect to time they are absent. As in seeds there is a germ (*vis*) of the things which are produced by them, so in causes are stored future events," 1.128.

[7] Joseph Moreau, *L'Âme du monde de Platon aux Stoïciens* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1939; reprinted Heidesheim: Georg Olms, 1971]), p. 169. The concept of *logoi spermatikoi* is used by Augustine in the Latinized form as *rationales seminales* to explain the problem, of appearance of new forms in nature after the work of creation was finished.

[8] Cicero, *ND* 1.37 = 1.530; Minucius, *Octavius* 19.10 = 1.532.

(*Tim.* 58c). Theophrastus mentions two kinds of fire (*De igne* 4). The problem of two kinds of fire is complicated by the fact that, beginning with Zeno, the Stoics claimed that there are, as already mentioned, two inseparable principles – matter and God; and four elements – fire, water, air, and earth (DL 7.134 = 1.85, 2.299). The world is created by God by transforming *ousia* into the four elements (DL 7.136 = 1.102), that is, "when *ousia* changes from fire" into the elements, including fire.[9] To reconcile the existence of two principles, designing fire, and four elements, including fire, it seems that designing fire should be seen as one of the two principles, God.[10] This conclusion is reinforced by testimonies in which precisely such identification was made by the Stoics themselves. For Zeno, God is designing fire (Augustine, *Contra acad.* 3.17.38 = 1.157), for the Stoics, fire is God (Augustine, *De civ. Dei* 8.5 = 2.423) and God is the designing fire (Aetius 1.7.33 = 2.1027).

Fire has a prominent position in the doctrine of conflagration. "At certain fated times the entire world is the subject of conflagration, and then is reconstructed afresh; but the primary fire is as it were a sperm which possesses the *logoi* of all things and the causes of past, present, and future events," says Aristocles (Eusebius, *Praep. ev.* 15.14.2 = 1.98). "The whole world is dissolved into fire" (15.18.2) and is then reconstituted thanks to the store of knowledge fire possesses; fire is like a seed from which everything develops in the next cycle (Stobaeus 1.20.1e = 1.107). The only substance that exists at conflagration is designing fire and this is the time when God has "the whole substance," that is, the whole of designing fire, as his *hegemonikon*; when under the direction of God, the world again unfolds in the next cosmic cycle, "God comes to be in a part of substance" (Origen, *CC* 4.14 = 2.1052). That is, during conflagration, the whole of substance becomes God's *hegemonikon*; substance becomes endowed only with qualities required by divine *hegemonikon*'s structure, that is, qualities which are necessary for God's proper functioning. This is the time when God can be identified with *hegemonikon*. After conflagration, substance constituting God's *hegemonikon* becomes matter out of which the world is reconstructed and, after the world is regenerated, God the designing fire becomes only "a part of the substance," immanent in the world, but not identical to it.

Pneuma

To Aristotle, the source of motion in the world was coming from the outside to the sublunar sphere: the unmoved mover caused a circular motion of celestial spheres made out of aethereal substance, and this motion was imparted onto the world of fire, water, air, and earth. But he also considered an immanent force, "a principle and a cause of motion and rest of the thing in which it resides" (*Phys.* 192b20). Strato denied the existence of a transcendent divinity. To him, an ultimate cause of motion was immanent and determined events through blind necessity.[11] The trend in the

[9] DL 7.142 = 2.581; Stobaeus 1.17.3 = 1.102.

[10] Michael Lapidge, 'ἀρχαί and στοιχεῖα: a problem in Stoic cosmology', *Phronesis* 18 (1973), p. 270.

[11] Plutarch, *Adv. Colot.* 1115b; Cicero, *ND* 1.35; Georges Rodier, *La Physique de Straton de Lampsaque* (Paris: Alcan, 1890), pp. 54–55.

Lyceum was to make the transcendent source of motion immanent in nature. Also, the current biological and medical theories attributed life to warmth in the body and breath, the carrier of this warmth. The current philosophical and scientific theories influenced the Stoic view of the world *pneuma*.

First, *pneuma* is self-moving and is in constant motion.[12] It moves the body (DL 7.157 = 1.135). In that, the Stoics are the heirs of Plato's doctrine of the source of motion.

Second, *pneuma* permeates the entire universe, as already stated by Cleanthes (Tertullian, *Apol*. 21 = 1.533) and confirmed by Chrysippus (Alexander, *De mixt.* 216.14 = 2.473), and holds it and everything in it together,[13] and thus *pneuma* is a cohesive force in the universe. Its peculiar property is called τόνος, tension, which is "the stroke of fire," sometimes called strength and force (Plutarch, *SR* 1034d = 1.563), and thus *pneuma* is characterized by tensional motion (τονικὴ κίνησις, Nemesius 2.12 = 2.451).

Third, as stated by Chrysippus, *pneuma* produces qualities in formless and unmoving matter. Qualities that are *pneumata* and air-like tensions produce forms and shapes (Plutarch, *SR* 1054a = 2.449). In this way, the world *pneuma* can be considered the totality of *pneumata* in the cosmos. The Stoics distinguish between two kinds of *pneuma*: *psychikon pneuma* (Galen, *De usu partium* 3.496 = 2.781) that is drier and warmer than the other kind (Galen, *Def. med.* 19.452 = 2.757, 787). The first kind is found in animals as *psyche* and in men and the whole cosmos as *nous*. The other kinds are *physis* and *hexis*. There are thus four kinds of beings in the universe, depending on the form of *pneuma* present in them. In inanimate objects, *pneuma* exists as *hexis*, in plants as *physis*, in animals as *psyche*, and in rational beings as *nous*. All bodies are sustained by *hexis*, a portion of the universal *pneuma*, and so each body has its individual *hexis*, each *hexis* being nothing else but (a current of) air. This sustaining *hexis*-air "is responsible for the quality of each of the bodies which are bound together by *hexis*, and they call this quality hardness in iron, density in stone, and whiteness in silver" (Plutarch, *SR* 1053f = 2.449). This *hexis*, a function of *pneuma* that individualizes bodies, is itself individualized in the body and exists in it in the form of air and infuses the body with particular forms. But the forms may evolve during the lifetime of the body. Where are the forms that will be acquired by the body in the future? They may be considered to exist already in the dormant and undeveloped form in the seed. The forms that are in this store evolve according to *logos spermatikos*, the law of development. However, since *logos spermatikos* is a formula of development, it is actualized by the force that stems from the *pneuma*, an air-like tension, specific to a particular body. The seed performs its function properly because *pneuma* uses its resources to bring it to fruition according to *logos spermatikos*.[14]

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[12] Alexander, *De mixt.* 224.14 = 2.442; Stobaeus 1.17.4 = 2.471.

[13] Simplicius, *In Phys.* 671.4–15 = 2.552; Themistius, *In Phys.* 4.8 = 2.553.

[14] Properties, that are streams of air, are *logoi spermatikoi* "when they are considered as coming from a seed, as growing and shrinking, as disappearing from a specific material and transferring to another, as developing and moving themselves according to their innermost essence and according to reason," Heinze, *Die Lehre vom Logos in der griechischen Philosophie*, p. 119.

Fourth, beginning with Chrysippus, *pneuma* is viewed as composed of air and fire,[15] or heat and cold (Galen, *De plac.* 5.447 = 2.841), whereas for Zeno, *pneuma* was one of the two *archai* that are distinguished from the four elements produced by *pneuma*. Chrysippus retains only elements, and *pneuma* is but a mixture of two active elements, air and fire. In this way "Chrysippus arrived at the more materialistic view and from the perspective of spiritualization of the *pneuma* he is clearly in regression in respect to his immediate predecessors."[16]

The world soul was mentioned in the Early Stoa. Zeno is said to have claimed that matter "does not lack eternal *spiritus* and liveliness which will turn it in a rational way" (Calcidius 292 = 1.88). This testimony is not very reliable, and it does not square well with the rest of Zeno's views.[17] It appears that Cleanthes was the first to mention the world *pneuma*,[18] although there are opinions that the concept of cosmic *pneuma* was introduced into Stoic philosophy by Chrysippus.[19] Cleanthes is more likely to have taken the lead in this because he took the lead in the introduction of *tonos*.[20] The importance of *pneuma*, particularly world *pneuma*, lies in its *tonos* through which cohesion of the world and of all individual being in it is assured.

It is important to notice that the Stoics not only mention cosmic *pneuma* but also cosmic *psyche*. For Cleanthes, God is the world *psyche* (Aetius 1.7.17 = 1.532). Chrysippus says that the world is a reasonable, animated (ἔμψυχον), intelligent living being (DL 7.142 = 2.633), that is, it possesses a *psyche*. He also explicitly mentions the cosmic *psyche*.[21] This expression is the consequence of the view – in which the Stoics follow Aristotle – that cosmos is alive. Being alive means being endowed with a soul, and as possessing a soul characterizes animals and humans, so it must also be a feature of the cosmic animal, the cosmic living entity, the entire world. But just as soul is a manifestation of the all-pervading *pneuma*, so is the world soul a manifestation of world *pneuma*, or as already stated by Zeno, "*psyche* is warm *pneuma*" (DL 7.157 = 1.136). This view allows the Stoics to switch between the cosmic *psyche* and the cosmic *pneuma*.

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[15] Alexander, *De anima* 26.13 = 2.786; Alexander, *De mixt.* 225.9 = 2.310.

[16] Gérard Verbeke, *L'Évolution de la doctrine du pneuma du stoïcisme à S. Augustin* (Paris: de Brouwer, 1945; reprinted New York: Garland, 1987), p. 70.

[17] Lapidge, 'ἀρχαί and στοιχεῖα: a problem in Stoic cosmology', p. 274.

[18] *spiritus*, Tertullian, *Apol.* 21.10; for *spiritus* = *pneuma*, see Cicero, *ND* 2.117, 134, 136, 138; Verbeke, *L'Évolution de la doctrine du pneuma du stoïcisme à S. Augustin*, p. 55; Heinze, *Die Lehre vom Logos in der griechischen Philosophie*, p. 89.

[19] Hans Leisegang, *Der heilige Geist* (Leipzig: Teubner, 1919; reprinted Stuttgart: Teubner, 1967), p. 50; Lapidge, 'ἀρχαί and στοιχεῖα: a problem in Stoic cosmology', pp. 274–276; Michael Lapidge, 'Stoic cosmology', in J.M. Rist (ed.), *The Stoics*, Berkeley: University of California Press 1978, pp. 169–170.

[20] Plutarch, *SR* 1034d. Possible Cynic influence is suggested by Ludwig Stein, *Die Psychologie der Stoa* (Berlin: Calvary, 1886), p. 30 note 37. F. Ogereau, *Essai sur le système philosophique des stoïciens* (Paris: Alcan, 1885), p. 10, conjectures that the idea of *tonos* was introduced by Zeno, but *tonos* is mentioned only once in a fragment that is considered to discuss Zeno's philosophy (Philo, *De aet. mundi* 23 = 1.106) and is indicated by a disputed word τείνεσθαι in Stobaeus 1.19.4 but the testimonies are far from certain, Alfred C. Pearson, *The Fragments of Zeno and Cleanthes* (London: Clay, 1891; reprinted New York: Arno Press, 1973]), pp. 110–111, 123, 254.

[21] Plutarch, *SR* 1052c = 2.604; Philo, *De aet. mundi* 19 = 2.397.

It is thus justified for them to say that the human soul is an offshoot (ἀπόσπασμα) of the cosmos as a living creature (DL 7.143 = 2.633) and a portion of the world *psyche* that penetrates and animates everything that exists (Hermias, *Irris. gentil. philos.* 14 = 1.495) because it means at the same time that the human soul is part of the cosmic *pneuma* in one of its tensional forms, that *pneuma* is responsible for conditions of the soul and the status of the individual, and that *pneuma* produces qualifications of individuals; thus man's individuality cannot be realized in any other place or time. The claim that the human soul is an offshoot of the cosmos is rendered in Roman Stoicism as a religious statement that human logos is a fragment of God identified as individual man.[22]

The harmony of the parts of the cosmos "could not happen as they do unless they were bound together by one divine and continuously connected *spiritus*" (Cicero, *ND* 2.19), which can only be done if *pneuma* has a measure of intelligence. And, in fact, the Stoics considered *pneuma* to be endowed with divine reason (Lactantius, *Div. inst.* 1.5 = 2.1025). As mentioned, *pneuma* always existed, but world soul is also indestructible (DL 7.156 = 2.774). Thus *pneuma*'s eternity and intelligence by themselves point to its divine status. We can find statements that the Stoics "made God … *pneuma* pervading the whole world" (Aetius 1.7.33 = 2.1027) and that for them "God is *pneuma* pervading everything and containing everything in itself" (Origen, *CC* 6.71 = 2.1051). God is repeatedly equated in testimonies with *pneuma*.[23] The Stoics defined the substance of God as "an intelligent and fiery *pneuma* which does not have a shape but changes into whatever it wishes and assimilates itself to all things" (Aetius 1.6.1 = 2.1009). Plato's transcendent Demiurge and world soul are folded by the Stoics into immanent God-*pneuma*, an intelligent and eternal being that designs the order of the universe and determines qualities of each individual entity in it. *Pneuma* is not just the instrument of God,[24] it is God, although God blended with matter.

God is *pneuma*, and God is the active principle which suggests that *pneuma* and the active principle should be identified. However, the active principle is the same as designing fire, but *pneuma* is a composite of fire and air where – because of the connection with air – undesigning fire is meant. The two accounts can be reconciled by referring to a development of the Stoic doctrine: Zeno's two principles are abandoned by Chrysippus and only his four elements are retained.[25] Chrysippus would agree with many of Zeno's formulations, but he would interpret them differently. In particular, both Zeno and Chrysippus would agree that the active principle is the same as *pneuma*, but Chrysippus abolishes the two principles as entities separate from the four elements and dissolves the former in the latter. In that, the active principle is at best a *modus loquendi* that refers to the *pneuma* which is a mixture of air and fire (destructive fire, that is; creative fire would be just another name for it). God-*pneuma* is still an active principle for Chrysippus, but God is not

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[22] Epictetus, *Discourses*, 1.17; Marcus Aurelius 5.27.

[23] Theophilus, *Ad Autol.* 1.4 = 2.1033; Clement, *Strom.* 5.14.2 = 2.1035; SE, *PH* 3.218 = 2.1037; with "intelligent and everlasting *pneuma*," Alexander, *De mixt.* 224.32 = 2.310.

[24] As stated by Harold A.K. Hunt, *A Physical Interpretation of the Universe: the doctrines of Zeno the Stoic* (Melbourne University Press, 1976), p. 41.

[25] Lapidge, 'ἀρχαί and στοιχεῖα: a problem in Stoic cosmology', p. 277.

a body distinguished, as for Zeno, from the four elements, but rather a composite of two of the elements.[26]

Incidentally, it is worth noting that the Stoics mention both matter and substance, which has a bearing on the problem of God. It is said that for Zeno and Chrysippus "matter (*silva*) is that which underlies all those things which have qualities; however, the prime matter of all things or their primeval foundation is substance (*essentia*) being in itself without qualities and unformed" (Calcidius 290 = 1.86). This testimony is used as the base of the inference that, for the Stoics, prime matter (πρώτη ὕλη) or first substance "has two aspects, one of which is ὕλη, one θεός."[27]

There is a plethora of testimonies that use words "matter" and "substance" interchangeably. For example, matter is called by Zeno and Chrysippus substance and matter (DL 7.150 = 1.87, 2.316); Zeno states that prime matter is the substance of all things (Stobaeus 1.11.5a = 1.87) and unqualified substance is matter (DL 7.134 = 1.85). Sextus begins his reasoning at one place in this way: "the substance of what exists" is motionless and since we see "the matter of the universe moving, etc." (SE 9.75 = 2.311), that is, substance is identified with matter. Also, "matter itself is substance" testifies Plotinus (2.4.1 = 2.320). Also, Calcidius, whose testimony is used in favor of the view that matter is an aspect of substance, uses in his exposition of Stoic views the phrase "matter or substance" (Calcidius 293); *essentia*, he says, "is the one common substrate (*substantia*) of everything" (Calcidius 292 = 1.88). He also elaborates on the afore-quoted view by saying that, for example, gold is "matter of those things that are manufactured from them," but not their substance (Calcidius 290). Substance is what lies at the basis of matter, whether it is gold or anything else. This example allows us to make a terminological distinction between material which is the matter spoken of in the last sentence and the matter which is the substrate of all things. Material is a qualified manifestation of unqualified matter and is the result of the activity of the active principle, God, on matter.[28] For Zeno then, God and substance are different although inseparable entities; for Chrysippus, God-substance of the conflagration period transforms part of substance, of itself, into material and still permeates it, and thus for Chrysippus it is correct to say that a self-crafting fire, God, uses itself as its own matter to generate the world.[29]

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[26] After Diogenes ascribes to both Zeno and Chrysippus the view that God created first the four elements out of matter, he says that "the four elements constitute together the passive substance or matter" (DL 7.137 = 2.580), but it seems that the latter view is Chrysippus', not Zeno's.

[27] Lapidge, 'ἀρχαί and στοιχεῖα: a problem in Stoic cosmology', pp. 243, 248 seconded by Robert B. Todd, 'Monism and immanence: the foundations of Stoic physics', in Rist (ed.), *The Stoics*, p. 142.

[28] It is said that "*ousia* designates prime matter that is formless whereas *hyle* designates concrete matter of a specific being," Verbeke, *L'Évolution de la doctrine du pneuma du stoïcisme à S. Augustin*, p. 136 note 365; Verbeke's pair *ousia-hyle* (= substance-matter) corresponds to the pair substance-material (= matter-material).

[29] Todd, 'Monism and immanence: the foundations of Stoic physics', pp. 142, 144; see also Hunt, *A Physical Interpretation of the Universe*, p. 51.

Aether

For Aristotle, aether was the fifth element, irreducible to the four elements; one reason being that the natural motion of aether is circular, whereas the natural motion of the four elements is rectilinear.[30] Zeno, on the other hand, is said to deny special status to aether (Cicero, *De fin.* 4.12 = 1.134).

The uppermost part of the heavens is defined by Zeno as αἰθέρος τὸ ἔσχατον (Achilles Tatius, *Isag.* 5 = 1.115) which may mean that the heavens are the extremity (of the universe) made out of aether (material genitive) or the extremity of aether (partitive genitive). The latter interpretation implies that aether is also in other parts of the universe, whereas the former does not exclude this possibility, but does not stress it. The material makeup of the heavens is confirmed in the testimony that the uppermost sphere of the universe is fire, called aether, which is filled with fixed stars (DL 7.137 = 2.580). Also, Cleanthes discusses "the furthest and highest and outermost, everywhere surrounding everything and encircling [it] and embracing heat which he calls aether" (Cicero, *ND* 1.37 = 1.534). To Chrysippus, aether is rarified fire (Plutarch, *SR* 1053a = 2.579), the purest and most rarified part of the cosmos (Stobaeus 1.21.5 = 2.527). The world's *hegemonikon* is the heavens, says Chrysippus (and Posidonius), who also states that "the purest part of the aether, … the first God," permeates the universe (DL 7.139). That is, aether is not limited to the heavens, but it is purest in the heavens, and it can be found in all parts of the universe mixed with other elements.

These testimonies make it clear that, to the Stoics, aether was fire in the purest form which is to be found on the boundaries of the world; the space filled with aether-fire is the repository of fixed stars. Also, in the words of Arius Didimus, *pneuma* is analogous to aether and both words are used synonymously (Stobaeus 1.17.4 = 2.471). However, because *pneuma* (since Chrysippus) is a mixture of fire and air, this synonymy cannot be pressed too far. Most importantly from a theological perspective, Zeno, Cleanthes, and Chrysippus call aether God[31] and the Stoics in general considered aether to be the principle of all (Minucius Felix, *Oct.* 19.10 = 1.154).

Aether does not play any particular role in the Stoic system. It seems that the only reason that aether appears in the discussions of the Stoics is that it was a current term of the time and the Stoics wanted to show a connection between their system and other systems, particularly peripatetic physics. By referring to aether and its undistinguished character in respect to the two principles and the four elements, the Stoics stressed the uniformity of the world. By reducing aether to fire, they abolished the division between supra- and sublunar spheres: the world is one, all laws of nature are found in all parts of the world. Furthermore, because God is aether-fire, and fiery *pneuma* permeates the entire universe, the world is a physico-theological unity, the same world for the living and the dead, because there is no ontologically special place for the departed souls. They exist in the same physical world as the living who

[30] *Gen. an.* 736b30, *Meteor.* 339b25, *De caelo* 269a26–28, 270b20–25.

[31] Cicero, *ND* 1.36, 39 = 1.154, 2.1077; *Acad.* 2.126 = 1.154; Lactantius, *Inst. div.* 1.5 = 1.534.

are able to communicate with them because the nature of the dead does not change, they are just as physical beings as the living.

Fate

An important concept in the Stoic system is the concept of fate, or destiny (εἱμαρμένη). Zeno defines fate as "the chainlike cause of existing things of the logos according to which they are ordered" (DL 7.149 = 1.175) and as "the moving power of matter in the same way, which does not differ from providence and nature" (Aetius 1.27.5 = 1.176). Generally, for the Stoics, fate is "a sequence of causes, that is, an inescapable ordering and connection" (Aetius 1.28.4 = 2.917) and "a certain natural order of all things following closely upon one another and moved in succession from eternity, and their interconnection is unalterable" (Gellius 7.2.3 = 2.1000). There is no chance, no randomness in the world, all order of events is determined by an all-embracing system of causal chains. Fate is ubiquitous, fate affects everything (DL 7.149 = 1.175) and all things happen according to fate.[32] There is no room for uncaused cause, as allowed through the concept of swerving in the Epicurean system. This, to be sure, raises the problem of freedom in a rigidly determined world. The Stoics addressed this problem by making a distinction between fate and providence (πρόνοια), that is, God's will. We only know that Cleanthes did not identify fate and providence (Calcidius 144 = 2.933) and this is also reflected in his hymn to Zeus in which the evil "in their folly" attempt to break with the divine law (ll. 15–17). However, for Chrysippus, providence is the same as fate (Calcidius 144).[33]

In the context of theology, it is important that, for Chrysippus, God is fate (Cicero, *ND* 1.39 = 2.1077) and "nothing takes place or moves in the least differently than according to the logos of Zeus, which he [Chrysippus] says is the same as fate" (Plutarch, *SR* 1056c = 2.997). In general, the Stoics are said to state that God is fate and fate is God who "is present in all existing things."[34]

These theological statements square well with other definitions of fate. "Fate is the logos of the cosmos"; "the logos of the things organized by providence in the cosmos"; "logos according to which the things which happened, happened, the things which are happening, are happening, and the things which will happen, will happen" (Stobaeus 1.5.15 = 2.913). Moreover, fate and logos of the world are interchangeable

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[32] Plutarch, *SR* 1056b = 2.997; Cicero, *De div.* 1.125–127 = 2.921, 944.

[33] This identification leads Duprat to the statement that "supreme God has himself no will: he is only reason," G.L. Duprat, 'La doctrine stoïcienne du monde, du destin et de la providence d'après Chrysippe', *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie* 23 (1910), p. 492, but we can easily claim that God wills to follow the dictates of universal logos, his own logos, follow himself and the laws he himself institutes according to his will. As Seneca phrased it, God "having once given a command, he always obeys" (*De prov.* 5.8). Cf. J. Mansfeld, 'Providence and the destruction of the universe in Early Stoic thought', in M.J. Vermaseren (ed.) *Studies in Hellenistic Religions* (Leiden: Brill, 1979), p. 161.

[34] Alexander, *De fato* 22 = 2.945, 31 = 2.928.

terms.[35] In this identification, probably *logos spermatikos*, the principle of growth, is meant:[36] "God contains 'seminal principles' according to which each thing comes about by fate" (Aetius 1.7.33 = 2.1027). Also, Chrysippus calls "the substance of fate a power of *pneuma*" (Stobaeus 1.5.15 = 2.913) that is in "eternal motion, continuous and ordered" (Theodoret 6.14 = 2.916). And because *pneuma* is the source of motion, so fate is *pneuma*. Because *pneuma* and logos are considered divine, it naturally follows that fate and *pneuma* and logos are seen as the same.

Nous

Nous, the Stoics are reported to say, is a part of *psyche* that manifests itself in rational beings (*logikoi*) only (Stobaeus 1.49.24 = 1.377). As already mentioned, *pneuma* manifests itself in the world as *hexis*, *physis*, *psyche*, and *nous*. *Psyche* is a form of *pneuma* found in animals and *nous* in humans and gods. Because the latter are higher beings than animals, *nous* can be considered a development of a form of *psyche* or – as the testimony just quoted suggests – *nous* is a part of *psyche*; by extending this reasoning, we may state that *psyche* is part of a particular being's *physis* and the latter a part of the being's *hexis*. All of them are ultimately manifestations of the all-pervading *pneuma*. Because God is said to be *pneuma*, it is not surprising to encounter Zeno's statement that *nous* is God (Epiphanius, *Adv. haer.* 3.2.9 = 1.146). Because God is also said to be fire and aether, it is only natural for Zeno to say that God is the fiery *nous* of the world[37] and for the Stoics to claim that the *nous* in aether[38] is God (Aetius 1.7.33 = 2.1027). Because the world as a whole is rational, as permeated by the divine logos, Chrysippus can say that the world is guided through *nous* and providence because *nous* permeates every part of the world (DL 7.138 = 2.634). But God-*nous-pneuma* endows particular beings with their particular characteristics, which leads to Zeno's pronouncement that God constantly moves through the substance and in one place it is *nous*, in another *psyche*, in another *physis*, and in yet another *hexis* (Themistius, *De anima* 72b = 1.158).

The World

The world is a living and rational being and its rationality is due to the cosmic logos-*pneuma*, the world soul, pervading it. The saturation level of the world with logos is not the same in all its parts and logos is concentrated to the maximum degree in the cosmic *hegemonikon* which is, according to Zeno and Chrysippus, the aethereal sphere of the

[35] Stobaeus 1.5.15 = 2.913; Lactantius, *De vera sap.* 9 = 1.160; Plutarch, *SR* 1050c, 1056c = 2.937.

[36] A.A. Long, 'Freedom and determinism in the Stoic theory of human action', in A.A. Long (ed.), *Problems in Stoicism* (London: The Athlone Press, 1971), p. 178.

[37] Aetius 1.7.23 = 1.157. Admittedly, Stobaeus 1.1.29b preserves only the phrase Ζήνων ὁ Στωικὸς νοῦν κόσμου πύρινον; the phrase θεὸν ἀπεφήνατο is added by Krische, Pearson, *The Fragments of Zeno and Cleanthes*, p. 92.

[38] νοῦς ἐναιθέριος, Wachsmuth; νοῦς ἐν αἰθέρι, von Arnim.

fixed stars, and, according to Cleanthes, the sun (DL 7.138–139 = 2.644). This rational, living world the Stoics considered to be God:[39] "The whole world along with all its parts they call God" (Eusebius, *Praep. ev.* 15.15 = 2.528). Also, Zeno calls the world "a beautiful animal and God" (Calcidius 292 = 1.88). The conclusion of the Stoic pantheism seems to be inescapable. On the other hand, as already indicated, Zeno distinguished between two principles, one of them being God. Also, as Zeno and Chrysippus say, God is "the principle of all things, the purest body, and his providence pervades all things" (Hippolytus, *Haer*. 1.21 = 1.153).[40] Zeno separated matter from God and saw God as going through matter like honey through the honeycomb (Tertullian, *Ad nat.* 2.4 = 1.155). He made matter equal to God (Tertullian, *De praescr. haer.* 7 = 1.156) and said that "the substance of God is the whole world and the heaven."[41] Cosmos, say the Stoics, is rational (νοερός, *sapiens*) and as such it is God.[42]

If the world is understood as an organization of the stars, then it is possible that in the pronouncements that the world is God, only the astral world is meant, the world of fixed stars.[43] This is the world's *hegemonikon*, and as such, the rational and thus most divine part of the entire universe. However, cosmos is also understood as the whole world – the whole of passive matter organized by active logos (DL 7.137–138). As man is his body and soul, at least during his terrestrial peregrinations, so is cosmos one beautiful animal, one entity, one God. This understanding is not only admissible, but inevitable because to the Stoics, the world is perfect in every respect (Cicero, *ND* 2.37–39,86–87). Cosmos is not only alive, but also rational and as such the most perfect being.[44] If the world is perfect and God is only one – although indispensable – part of it, so God by himself is not perfect, not, at least, to the extent that the world is. But there cannot be anything more perfect than God. In fact, Cleanthes offers a proof of God's existence from degrees of perfection. There are different levels of perfection, and thus there must be something most perfect since an infinite sequence of perfect beings is impossible, and beings in the world cannot be perfected indefinitely. Among these beings, as man surpasses other beings with respect to beauty and intelligence, there must be a god who surpasses man, so God ("an animal that is best and most excellent") exists.[45] A Stoic philosopher is

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[39] Cicero, *ND* 1.37 = 1.530 (Cleanthes); DL 7.137 = 2.526; Stobaeus 1.21.5 = 2.527 (Chrysippus).

[40] The fact of divine omnipresence is poetically expressed by Aratus in the opening verses of his *Phaenomena*: "all ways are full of Zeus, and all human gathering places and full [of him] are seas and havens," which harks back to Thales' "everything is full of the gods."

[41] DL 7.148 = 1.163. It is suggested that Diogenes inadvertently changed ὁ κόσμος οὐσία θεοῦ ἐστίν, the world is (made out of) substance of God, to οὐσία θεοῦ ὁ ὅλος κόσμος καὶ ὁ οὐρανὸς (ἐστίν), Eduard Wellmann, *Die Philosophie des Stoikers Zenon* (Leipzig: Teubner, 1873), p. 37; cf. Pearson, *The Fragments of Zeno and Cleanthes*, p. 121. This would, however, require not only changing the order of the words but also adding some more; moreover, Diogenes also finds this statement in Chrysippus and Posidonius and it is difficult to assume that he misreads the statement the same way every time.

[42] SE 9.95 = 2.1015; Cicero, *ND* 2.39 = 2.641.

[43] Verbeke, *L'Évolution de la doctrine du pneuma du stoïcisme à S. Augustin*, p. 57.

[44] Cicero, *ND* 2.21 = 1.111; Seneca, *De benef.* 4.7 = 2.1024.

[45] SE 9.88–89 = 1.529; Cicero, *ND* 2.33, 35 = 1.529.

thus forced to accept pantheism, having accepted that there is the most perfect God immanent in the most perfect world.

The Stoics thus vacillated (at last) between two concepts of God: God is the entire cosmos, or only its rational part – logos-*pneuma*.[46] If the first meaning is stressed, then one cannot seriously doubt the pantheism of the Stoics.[47] If the second meaning is emphasized – the duality of the active and the passive principles – we have what can be termed panentheism: "everything is in God and God penetrates all things."[48] But even if only the second meaning is retained, the Stoic system can still be considered pantheistic, at least Chrysippus' version. For Zeno and Cleanthes, at the time of conflagration, the world dissolves into matter. There exists only God and matter. For Chrysippus, there exists only God-designing fire. At that time the whole of reality is God, and the world is re-created from God himself.[49]

Whether understood pantheistically or panentheistically, God is responsible for everything that is, for all events, for the entire history of the world. God is not only *pneuma-aether*-designing fire, but also fate and providence. God not only knows what is happening in the world, but he also wills it to happen, unless it is assumed that he can act against himself. The same God can be found in all parts of the world. One consequence of this monistic outlook is the Stoic idea of universalism – every person is part of the same logos, including slaves; cosmopolitanism – everyone is a citizen of the same world; and the world-*polis* – the world is a home of men and gods,[50] which is strongly pronounced in Epictetus and Marcus Aurelius, a former slave and an emperor. Equalizing gods and men is the pinnacle of the Stoic social ethics. By participating in the same logos, men are like gods.[51]

Another consequence of this pantheism is strong monotheism. The gods are repeatedly mentioned by the Stoics, but they are clearly subsidiary beings in respect to God. The Stoics did not entirely reject the gods of popular religion and even used

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[46] Simon mentions three concepts of God: transcendent God who guides the world, God who pervades the world, and mythical gods, Marie Simon, 'Zum Problem der stoischen Theologie', in J. Irmscher and W. Steffen (eds) *Philologische Vorträge* (Wrocław: Ossolineum, 1959), p. 72. However, there is no transcendent God in the Stoics, so the first concept may only mean God the cosmos.

[47] Heinze, *Die Lehre vom Logos in der griechischen Philosophie*, p. 105; an attempt to weaken the Stoic pantheism is the statement that "in so far as God is manifested in the world, the world is God," Pearson, *The Fragments of Zeno and Cleanthes*, p. 121, which is not altogether convincing. "The identification of God with the world was a central tenet of Stoicism, a postulate of the Stoic vitalism and in concert with the principles of Stoic physics," Myrto Dragona-Monachou, *The Stoic Arguments for the Existence and the Providence of the Gods* (Athens, 1976), p. 69.

[48] Verbeke, *L'Évolution de la doctrine du pneuma du stoïcisme à S. Augustin*, p. 38.

[49] Émile Bréhier, *Chrysippe et l'ancien Stoïcism* (Paris: PUF, 1951 [1910]), p. 147, denies pantheism in Chrysippus, and Verbeke, *L'Évolution de la doctrine du pneuma du stoïcisme à S. Augustin*, p. 88 writes about Chrysippus' semi-pantheism. Both authors focus only on one, narrower, understanding of God.

[50] Cicero, *De fin*. 3.67 = 3.371; Eusebius, *Praep. ev*. 15.15.3–5 = 2.528; Origen, *CC* 4.74 = 2.1157; Cicero, *ND* 2.78–79 = 2.1127.

[51] Alexander, *De fato* 37 = 3.247; Seneca, *Ep*. 31.9,11 = 3.200a.

the fact of universal agreement[52] and the fact of building altars (Themistius, *Anal. post.* 79.1 = 2.1019) in the proof of their existence. However, the gods are God's creations that, unlike the gods of mythology, are not immortal: they are destroyed in the cosmic conflagration and re-created in each cosmic cycle of palingenesis. Immortality, the one attribute of divinity, characterizes "Zeus, who alone of the gods is imperishable" (Plutarch, *CN* 1077e = 2.1064). Nonetheless, their acceptance of the gods was at best half-hearted. So as not to compromise their monotheism, they attempted to explain – even explain away – the gods' existence by, primarily, treating them allegorically. The gods of popular religion were simply unacceptable: jealous, squabbling, vindictive Olympian gods are just fables of the poets, a subject of superstition and "idiotic beliefs," and "utterly unprofitable and frivolous" (Cicero, *ND* 2.63, 70). Zeno dismissed them by saying that Juno (Hera) was air, Jove (Zeus) the heavens, Neptune (Poseidon) the sea, Vulcan (Hephaestus) fire;[53] that is, the gods are names of different manifestations of the one God.[54] One way of explaining the gods was by reference to etymology. "With extraordinary patience … Zeno, and even more his followers, wasted their sagacity" to explain the names of the gods with "hair-raising etymology."[55] However, they were not at all original in this approach since it was conducted very much in the spirit of Plato's *Cratylus*.

If the gods are mortal so also are humans or rather their souls after death. Immortality of the soul is abolished in the Stoic eschatology. Souls after death can at best survive until conflagration,[56] during which, like everything else, they are dissolved. Therefore, punishment after death is illusory: true justice is fully realized on earth.[57]

The idea of God-cosmos leads directly to the Stoic ethical doctrine.

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[52] SE 9.61–62, 133; Cicero, *ND* 2.5–6, 12–13. On the argument of universal consent, see Dragona-Monachou, *The Stoic Arguments for the Existence and the Providence of the Gods*, pp. 44–46.

[53] Minucius Felix, *Octav.* 19.10 = 1.169; see Cicero, *ND* 1.36 = 1.167.

[54] DL 7.147 = 2.1021. Louis Gernet, André Boulanger, *Le Génie grec dans la religion* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1970 [1932]), pp. 406–407; Dorothea Frede, 'Theodicy and providential care in Stoicism', in D. Frede and A. Laks (eds), *Traditions inTheology* (Leiden: Brill, 2002), pp. 104, 112. Bréhier, *Chrysippe et l'ancien Stoïcism*, p. 200, suggests that the gods can also be considered spirits emanating from God. Stoic novelty consists in considering the gods as the forces resulting from transformation of the unique force from which they emanate and to which they return by universal conflagration, which is an expression of the rational polytheism.

[55] Wellmann, *Die Philosophie des Stoikers Zenon*, p. 55; Stoic explanations are sometimes "farfetched word explanations that often touch upon the ridiculous," Simon, 'Zum Problem der stoischen Theologie', p. 74, and their "arbitrariness and puerility seem to us barely tolerable," Gernet and Boulanger, *Le Génie grec dans la religion*, p. 409.

[56] The difference between Cleanthes' belief that all souls survive until conflagration, and Chrysippus' conviction that only the souls of the wise are capable of such survival (because they are stronger, DL 7.157 = 1.522, Aetius 4.7.3 = 2.810) is, eschatologically, minor.

[57] René Hoven, *Stoïcism et stoïciens face au problème de l'au-delà* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1971), p. 84.

Nature

Zeno stated that the goal of life, *telos*, is "to live in agreement," that is, "with a single and harmonious logos." A longer formula, "living in harmony with nature," was developed later because Zeno's formula was considered incomplete (Stobaeus 2.7.6a = 1.179). Chrysippus explains that *telos* is "living according to experience in those things that happen naturally" (DL 7.87 = 1.552), and according to the Stoics, *telos* means "to live in the continuous use of exact knowledge of those things that happen naturally" (Cicero, *De fin*. 4.14 = 3.13). The concept of nature is critical in these definitions. What is nature?

Zeno says that nature is the designing fire advancing on its path toward generation (Cicero, *ND* 2.57 = 1.171); the same is stated by all the Stoics (DL 7.156 = 2.774). When we read that according to the Stoics "all things are subject to nature" which "has a share in reason and order" (Cicero, *ND* 2.81), we see, basically, the same definition: nature is designing fire whose essence is rationality, logos. Nature is thus the orderly side of the universe, and this orderly side can only be God-logos. Therefore, after Seneca we can pose a rhetorical question, "What else is nature than what God and divine *ratio* present in all the world and all its parts?" (Seneca, *De benef.* 4.7.1 = 2.1024).

Living according to nature means avoiding what the sound logos prohibits, the logos that permeates everything and is the same as Zeus (DL 7.87–88); it is living "in harmony with God's will."[58] Each action is according to a divine plan, and as such it is good; an individual can have peace of mind only when his will is in harmony with the divine will.

The Stoics thus begin with the delineation of the structure of the world, with physics, but in their monistic system, theology is the reverse side of physics. Analysis of *pneuma* is the analysis of the physical side of the same entity that metaphysics analyzes as an active principle, logic – as logos, and theology – as God. These branches of knowledge are analyzing rational God-*pneuma* for a very practical reason, to know how to live. As Chrysippus stated, "there is no other or more appropriate way to approach the logos of good and bad things or the virtues or happiness than from common nature and from the administration of the world" (Plutarch, *SR* 1035c = 3.68).[59]

This physico-theological unity found in the Stoic God as expressed by the Stoic pantheism has as a natural consequence what can be called pantheistic determinism.[60] On the one hand, this determinism gives a scientific justification for divination and an ethical justification for living according to nature, but, on the other hand, it poses insurmountable problems to the idea of freedom and the existence of evil.

Can there be any freedom in the world in which God is fate? This was a troublesome problem for the Stoics, and they never solved it satisfactorily. It was expressed in Zeno's and Chrysippus' metaphor of a dog tied to a cart: the dog may

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[58] Edwyn Bevan, *Stoics and Sceptics* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1913), p. 55.

[59] Gilbert Murray summarizes the Stoic approach by saying that they did not just want to reestablish a traditional code of morals, they wanted to "find a new basic conduct in absolute 'reason'," in conversation with Bevan, *Stoics and Sceptics*, p. 52, note 1.

[60] Gordon H. Clark, *Selections from Hellenistic Philosophy* (New York: Crofts, 1940), p. 59.

willingly follow the cart, but if it does not want to, it will be dragged by the cart anyhow (Hippolytus, *Haer.* 1.21 = 2.975). Cleanthes expresses this sentiment in his prayer to Zeus (Epictetus, *Ench.* 53 = 1.527):

> Lead me, Zeus and destiny,
> wherever is your will that I go
> since I will follow unhesitatingly; when I don't want to,
> having become evil, I will follow, docile, anyway.

This raises a serious, practical problem of responsibility and punishment for one's actions. If everything is preordained, is it just to mete out punishment? To a slave who was about to be flogged for stealing and who said, "it was fated for me to steal," Zeno replied, "and to be flogged" (DL 7.23 = 1.298). Although the answer may appear to be tongue-in-cheek, it is consistent with the Stoic doctrine. When Chrysippus was asked whether one should call a doctor if it is fated to get well or remain sick, he answered that both calling the doctor and healing are co-fated (Cicero, *De fato* 30 = 2.956).

This strict determinism is more apparent if we also consider the problem of conflagration. As already mentioned, the world is a subject of total destruction in fire and subsequent rebirth. Conflagration is justified by the need of the cosmic catharsis: after conflagration there is only God, who is all goodness, "no evil at all remains, but the whole is then prudent and wise."[61] Afterwards, everything is restored to the same state, so, for example, "there will be again Socrates and Plato and each of the people along with the same friends and citizens; they will do and pursue the same things and every city and corner and hamlet and field will be reestablished the same way" (Nemesius 38 = 2.625). After conflagration, "all things exist again in the world numerically, and thus each individual, the same as in the preceding world, exists again in this world," according to Chrysippus (Alexander, *In Anal. pr.* 180.33–36 = 2.624). Even if the claim is interpreted as stating that in the renewed world each individual will not be literally the same, but "a new individual with the same characteristics and experiences,"[62] very strong determinism still stands. And this cannot be any other way: because, as mentioned, the world is perfect in every respect, the same world has to be re-created each time if this world is to remain

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[61] Plutarch, *CN* 1067a = 2.606. Perhaps we may also say that "total conflagration is a form of apotheosis," Mansfeld, 'Providence and the destruction of the universe in Early Stoic thought', p. 180. It is worth noticing that a physical reason for conflagration is that all moisture is used up and only fire remains (Cicero, *ND* 2.118 = 2.593).

[62] Margaret E. Reesor, *The Nature of Man in Early Stoic Philosophy* (London: Duckworth, 1989), p. 9. Some Stoics admitted some "small difference … between the facts of one period and the preceding phase" (Origen, *CC* 5.20 = 2.626), but it seems that such a claim is "explicitly revisionary" and a strong determinism is the original Stoic statement, A.A. Long, D.N. Sedley, *The Hellenistic Philosophers* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), vol. 1, p. 312. If we also agree with the statement that "it was for the faith in Providence above all else that the Stoic stood in the ancient world," Bevan, *Stoics and Sceptics*, p. 44, then we see that strict determinism is the result of the nature of God and of his will that it should be so.

perfect. Although man is imperfect and may strive for improvement, the world as a whole is created perfectly all at once; it does not evolve.[63]

This pantheistic determinism also poses the problem of explaining the existence of evil. Where everything is derived from universal, perfect logos, there should be no room for evil. And if there is, no man is responsible for it, but God himself. There were some attempts to explain this situation. Evil was explained as a means of promoting good. In the Malthusian spirit, Chrysippus said that wars are the means of avoiding overpopulation (Plutarch, *SR* 1049a = 2.1177), and predators exist for men to exercise their valiance (Cicero, *ND* 2.161). Also, evil is indispensable for good to be recognizable (Gellius 7.1.1–13 = 2.1169, 1170). It is not entirely unjustified to say that in explaining evil Chrysippus was sometimes exercising "childish rationalism."[64] It was much more honest of Cleanthes to simply state in his hymn to Zeus that everything in the world happens according to the cosmic logos, except the deeds of evil (ll. 15–17). God can turn evil into good after it happens, but he is not willing that to happen. God's omniscience[65] can be reconciled with the independence of the evil, but how to reconcile it with God's fate, with God's guiding the course of all things (ll. 10–12), Cleanthes does not explain.

In their theology, the Stoics wanted to restore the position of God in the universe. For Plato, the Demiurge molds the universe from pre-existing matter using eternal ideas as models, and then leaves the maintenance of the universe to the divine stars and the world soul. The status of God decreases significantly in peripatetic philosophy. Aristotle's God is not interested in the world; God does not even know the world exists because such knowledge would undermine divine perfection. The only role God is playing is to serve as a prime mover to the first heaven and consequently to the entire world. Because of this limited role of God, it is not surprising to see criticism concerning the need of God in the peripatetic universe. Importantly, the criticism stemmed from the ranks of the Lyceum itself. Theophrastus, Aristotle's successor, attempted to restore the role of God in the universe, but Strato rejected any God by explaining naturalistically all physical phenomena. He did not have any use for a transcendent God in dealing with the problem of motion. At the same time, a Democritean philosophy, renewed by Epicurus, proposed the vision of the gods who live in the realm far away from the earth, not troubled by human affairs. This was unsatisfactory to the Stoics who saw God as clearly interested in human affairs, not as a being detached from the world. In their restoration of theology, they took the current developments of science into account and proposed a scientistic solution: God is what science says is the source of life, *pneuma*, and whose intelligence, logos, is the best embodiment of the laws of logic. God is the best that science can envision – perfect in execution of physical and logical laws – but nothing more; that is, God's transcendence is abolished in the spirit of their times. God is now interested in human affairs because all the facets of

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[63] Bréhier, *Chrysippe et l'ancien Stoïcism*, p. 146.

[64] Wilhelm Capelle, 'Zur antiken Theodicee', *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie* 20 (1907), p. 188.

[65] It is clear that God is omniscient because only God can "see with his mind the connection of all causes," and thus God "necessarily grasps all that will be," as says Quintus Cicero in defense of the Stoic theory of divination, Cicero, *De div.* 1.127 = 2.944.

these affairs, and of the entire universe, for that matter, are permeated by God. God *is* these affairs. He not only is to be found in everything, but he also *is* everything, *Deus sive natura* in the most extreme form. God is ubiquitous and omniscient, and thus nothing can escape the divine attention. But, as mentioned, this leads to the problem of freedom and evil, the problem the Early Stoics never solved successfully. To their credit, this is one of the most difficult theological and philosophical problems and centuries-long attempts in grappling with the problem of freedom vs. predestination is ample evidence of its complexity – and importance.

In the Middle Stoa, at first, theology becomes secondary. For Panaetius, accident becomes an ontological category, unlike in the Early Stoa. Nature has all the necessary characteristics of a cosmic deity, but is not considered to be divine. In his criticism of divination, he did not reject an influence of the stars, but only the predictions of astrologers.

Posidonius restores the importance of theology. His modifications of the orthodox Stoic philosophy include: (1) the division of the soul into rational and irrational parts, in which he follows Panaetius, thereby making a propensity to evil inborn; (2) he accepts the immortality of the human soul; (3) he also creates a greater chasm between God, the pure rationality, and man who is immune to the influence of passions.[66]

This restoration by Posidonius of the importance of theology generally characterizes the legacy of Greek philosophy. Roman Stoicism is saturated with religious investigations in writings by Epictetus and Marcus Aurelius. Theology is important in the Neopythagorean writings of Theon, Numenius, and Nicomachus. It is also of primary interest in the Neoplatonists, even more so than in Plato himself, as seen in works of Plutarch, Porphyry, Iamblichus, Proclus and, most of all, Plotinus. Also, strong Greek influences in Philo should be mentioned. But, in spite of this prominence given to theology, after the early stages of the existence of the Lyceum, Academy, Stoa, and the Gardens, Greek genius in philosophy and theology does not really have nothing significantly new to offer. The only notable exception of originality of Greek tradition is Plotinus. For several centuries Greek philosophy is – to paraphrase Whitehead – primarily a footnote to its own former greatness until its demise with the closing of the Academy in 529 by the emperor Justinian. With the Presocratics it started as philosophy with a strong theological component, as philosophical theology, as an intellectual effort to make sense of the world by philosophically elaborating the *arche*, the principle and the beginning of the world by replacing unsatisfactory solutions offered by traditional religion. The theological significance of the *arche* is implicit, as for instance in Anaxagoras, or explicit, as for example in Xenophanes. But this theological significance is deflected in Democritus and in the Sophists and is only partially restored in Plato and Aristotle. For philosophers after Plato and Aristotle, theology may even be nonexistent (Strato), although, generally, its role increases. Theological thinking, usually secondary up to that point, gains more and more in prominence. However, it is not in the Greek mind that theology ultimately assumes primary interest and becomes a framework in which philosophical investigations can be conducted, but in Christianity.

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[66] Adam Drozdek, 'Theology of the Middle Stoa', *Giornale di Metafisica* 24 (2002), pp. 333–364.

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